

# THE SLOVAK VOICE IN BRUSSELS

How to Make It Louder and More Coherent

*Renáta Králiková*  
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SLOVAK GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE  
INŠTITÚT PRE DOBRE SPRÁVOVANÚ SPOLOČNOSŤ



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Published for SGI by: ADIN, s.r.o.

Published in July 2007.

**ISBN 978-80-89244-19-5**

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Funded by the British Embassy in Bratislava



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SGI is a non-profit, non-partisan civic association. The aim of SGI is to find solutions to improve public finance allocation procedures in order to secure high standard, accessible, transparent and efficient public services for Slovak citizens.

SGI was established in October 2001 with the support of INEKO (Institute for Economic and Social Reforms) in order to attract and distribute existing activities regarding reforms of public administration.

“The Slovak Voice in Brussels” report was written by SGI experts. The aim of the report is to propose changes that would lead to an increased influence of Slovakia on actions and decision-making processes on European Union level.

The report is divided into three parts. The first part defines the current situation in promoting Slovak interests in the EU. The second part identifies the key issues concerning this process. The third part of the report suggests measures needed to reinforce the voice of Slovakia in the EU and to establish more strategic approach towards this area.

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## INTRODUCTION

“The Slovak Voice In Brussels – How To Make It Louder And More Coherent” is a project of the Slovak Governance Institute (SGI), in which SGI tries to handle the topic not so resonant in public or expert circles, and take it to a position where there is enough regard to it. In some of the areas of promoting the Slovaks at EU level we are getting on well. However, there are many fields where Slovakia lags behind and depletes its potential influence on the course of events in the EU. The report, you’re now holding in your hands, analyses the current situation and provides possible solutions.

The project was financially supported by the British Embassy in Bratislava. It is obvious, but also interesting that stronger Slovak influence in the EU is supported by a country we consider to be falsely connected with euro-sceptical opinions, but on the other hand retaining a well established system to influence European policies and human resources development in the EU. The example of Great Britain enforcing its interests in Brussels was one of the inspiring aspects of the decision to address this topic from Slovak point of view. The main reason was the fact that the increasing influence of the EU on everyday life of the Slovak society, translated mainly into European and national legislation and regulations, creates the need for strategic and long-term approach in enforcing the Slovak interests in the EU. We decided to analyse the current state in Slovakia and come up with suggestions leading to move Slovakia from being a passive receiver to an active creator of new EU policy frameworks. Last but not least, our motivation was conditioned by personal experience we have brought to SGI from our previous professional activities. This personal ‘touch’ to Slovak policy-making mechanisms regarding the EU, has especially been perceived as an advantage in handling this topic and being familiar with this particular area of research.

The analysis drew mainly on discussions with representatives of Central Government Authorities, regions, Permanent Representation of SR to the EU, Permanent Representation of Denmark and Hungary to the EU, the European Commission staff, national experts, educational institutions, journalists, private sector, NGOs and the European Personal Selection Office. We carried out 37 interviews. We also used documents, accessible on web sites of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Permanent Representation, of EU institutions and others.

A big relief appeared after the accession of Slovakia to the EU, which was obvious taking into consideration the number of negotiation chapters that we as the country had to close swiftly. Unfortunately, in many areas this experience has transformed into a constant state of waiting for instructions what to do. The necessity of active approach in creating new policies is being perceived in case of Slovakia as the key one. Slovakia as a new and relatively small European country has no other way than to choose such approach. Today, the threats from the actions of Slovakia in the EU, the influence on our economy and living standards are no longer legitimate. We can have different opinions on EU actions as such, the decision-making mechanisms, on policies EU enforces and creates, but in any case we should perceive Slovakia as part of the European region that creates the basic frame for future direction of the country. It is up to us to find out how to exploit this new region.

The key part of our work is to create a target-oriented system of promoting Slovak interests. Without a strategic approach to human resource development, pieces of information and the system design, Slovakia will be left behind in the EU, relying on ad hoc solutions with disputable efficiency.

This document focuses on observing the Slovak voice in Brussels that, according to us, is weak, fade and not coherent enough. These attributes do not occur by coincidence; they are based on weaknesses the country has. To recognize them is what we think, one of the initial steps to improvement. The whole project was regarded as a chance to co-create the new system by collaborating closely with people who today represent its integral part. This particular involvement of people working daily in relevant areas we consider as a significant added value of our project’s outputs. In this document we use the notion ‘the Slovaks’ within the meaning of Slovak citizens, since we consider this expression to be more understandable at reading.

Our study focuses on several aspects of establishing the Slovaks at EU level. A significant part of the effort to be heard in Europe consists of human resources that we have in order to reach our targets. Again, without systematic training and investments into human resources we will not be competitive in the union of 27 member states. The fact the older member states are in this respect ahead is slightly eliminated by giving preference to people from new member states. Nevertheless, this phenomenon will only be of limited duration.

An important tool to help us flexibly solve different issues is information and information channels. It is this information flow, its simple accessibility, timeliness and comprehensibility to allow us use the human resources very efficiently and to have an advantage over the other states. After all, it is the system itself, in which people and information move and which forms the overall success of promoting Slovakia's interests. This system runs from the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Slovak Government in Bratislava to the Permanent Representation of SR to the EU (hereinafter referred to as "PR") in Brussels. It is in their mutual 'tuning', competence and co-operation as well as in their relations and co-operation with other stakeholders from various parts of the society to provide for smooth actions in all areas in safeguarding Slovakia's interests in Brussels.

Creating opportunities for meetings, addressing new people or supplying technical support are all tasks of PR that boosts networking of Slovaks and thus contributes to building of informal relationships, leading to increased willingness to co-operate.

After exploring the present situation in the areas of human resources, information flow and the system in general, we have identified central issues we consider as key ones in the powerless promotion of Slovaks and Slovak interests. After many discussions with nearly 40 stakeholders and examining all the accessible materials, we were able not just to address all the challenges, but also to propose possible solutions. The proposed solutions are mostly designed for medium term perspective.

Slovakia, by the number of its inhabitants, cannot 'gamble' its human resources away. A long-term strategy to educate them, send them abroad and subsequently to use their knowledge in all different areas is the key prerequisite for the success of Slovakia in relation to the EU. To utilise all educational capacities and prepare individuals to pass entry exams, interviews, while using all forms of traineeship and internship programmes, encouraging well-educated individuals to work in the EU and in the public sector, providing governmental and PR support; all these activities must be compliant and interactive, if we intend to reach optimal efficiency. The Government must be supportive to sending the highest possible number of people to European institutions to acquire respective knowledge and understanding of different areas of work. Their return will be of huge benefit in improving the quality of performance in particular areas and actions in the European area.

A well-balanced job-matching at all levels and in all areas belongs to one of the major insufficiencies of Slovakia. At the same time, state's support during selection procedures and in the process of finding jobs for successful graduates creates the first important precondition for future co-operation. This co-operation is vital to strengthening of the Slovak voice in Brussels in active policy making in all areas. The possibility to contact Slovaks working in different Directorates-General (hereinafter referred to as "DGs") of the European Commission is a crucial part at promoting Slovak proposals by drafting the strategic documents. On the other hand, filling middle and higher management positions will attract new interns and national experts, as management plays an important role in the process of their selection. At the same time, people in management positions will help to provide information about free positions and the prepared legislation. Using these pieces of information and the human networks is what increases the competitiveness. Slovakia should focus on gathering modern and efficient information tools including functional human networks, which will allow sharing information among all people who wish to acquire them. Removing barriers and creating simple access to information sources is clearly a key to success.

Developing an appropriate system together with maximum utilisation of human resources and information requires a flexible approach. One can expect the situation for Slovakia to be very different in times it will lose all advantages of a new member state and starts to compete with other member states. The actual process of promoting interests is very dynamic and creative and it is necessary, from the long-term perspective, to obtain people's awareness. This, in the initial stage, requires changes in the actual system of education to increase the well-being of Slovaks intending to work for EU institutions.

Introducing and maintaining an efficient system of promoting Slovak solutions and attitudes in Brussels will benefit the whole country. Supporting the business requirements also means to support employment. Influencing regulations about structural funds can lead to their increased utilisation. One could find similar examples in all the different areas where regulations, that we are obliged to follow, are established in Brussels. According to many estimates the European legislation influences 70% of the national legislation. To ignore the opportunity to "shape" it would be a great deal of luxury for Slovakia.

We would like to thank all the people who provided us with their experience and opinions on the Slovak voice in Brussels, allowing us to absorb different views on its quality and power.

Special acknowledgements to Mrs. Patrícia Dudová from the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. Maroš Šefčovič, Slovak Ambassador to the EU, to Mr. Peter Javorčík from Commissioner Figel's Cabinet and to Mr. Vladimír Grieger from EPSO for providing us with great amount of additional information and consultations with the apparent intention to help us in our work and to increase the quality of the analysis you are about to discover.

## **The Slovaks in Brussels: Current Situation**

The first part of the report sets up the basic factual framework followed through the whole report. This chapter begins with the description of all types of EU positions, staffing mechanisms and the review how Slovakia, after three years of the EU membership, manages the process of pursuing Slovaks in EU institutions. The chapter is followed by the list of present activities to support Slovak presence at EU institutions and to improve communication and collaboration with Slovaks already working for the EU. The final section of the chapter examines the situation regarding Slovak regional and private business representation on the European level.

### ***The Slovaks and EU Institutions***

The report defines EU institutions as all the institutions of the European Community, i.e. central, financial, advisory, inter-institutional and decentralised bodies<sup>1</sup>. There are four basic ways for Slovaks to get in the EU institutions. The first is the appointment by state, public or local authorities or private organisations (national expert, structural traineeship, other internship programmes and regional representation in the House of Regions). The second is to be employed at EU institutions, either as EU officials, who passed the selection procedure and received a permanent or temporary contract working for EU institutions. The time limited jobs also include blue book traineeship at the European Commission, internship programmes at other EU institutions, temporary agents or contract agents. The third possibility is to be employed in Cabinet of Slovak Appointee to EU institutions. The last option is to become a political nominee to one of the positions in the institutions, which are based on political decisions of the relevant Member State. Occasionally, people who were appointed to represent Slovakia later on pass EU selection procedure and become EU employees.

The Slovaks, apart from working for EU institutions, also work in non-governmental organisations on the European level (i.e. Centre for European Policy Studies, European University Association), in lobby groups (Amrop Hever Office in Brussels), media in Brussels (e.g. EU observer) or as Slovak media correspondents<sup>2</sup>.

From the point of view of enhancement of chances of Slovaks to be hired by EU institutions, it is interesting to notice the actual Permanent Representation (PR) of SR to the EU in Brussels, which currently employs 86 people. Regarding the Slovak voice in Brussels it is necessary to recognise that former employees of PR, returning to their office in Slovakia, convey their expertise both in subject matters and in the area of work in the European institutions. Therefore it is vital for the organisation the former PR employees are returning to, to offer them a position where they can utilise all of their experience. Working for PR can also help people who will be applying to work at EU institutions to better understand EU policies, methods of work and to establish contacts they might find useful in the selection process.

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<sup>1</sup> The EU institutions include: fundamental institutions (the European Commission, The Council of the European Union, The European Parliament, The European Court of Justice, The Court of Auditors, The European Ombudsman), EU financial bodies (The European Central Bank, The European Investment Bank), advisory bodies (The European Economic and Social Committee, The Committee of Regions), inter-institutional bodies (Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, The European Personnel Selection Office) and decentralized bodies of the EU (The European Community agencies, Common Foreign and Defence policy agencies, Police and Judiciary Co-operation in Criminal Matters and executive agencies) (Training for EU institutions Selection Procedures, Practical handbook, Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs SR, 2006, p. 6 – 15).

<sup>2</sup> Slovak print media do not have their own correspondents in Brussels.

Table No. 1: Employment at EU institutions

Type of employment	Period of employment
<i>Employment based on state appointment</i>	
National expert	6 months to 2 years, can be extended to 4 years
Structural traineeship	3 to 5 months (two possible staff rosters: March to end of July maximum or October to end of February maximum)
<i>Employed at EU institution</i>	
EU Official	Permanent, after 9 months trial period
Temporary agent	Maximum 6 years
Contract agent	Maximum 5 years with possible extension to permanent for manual and assistant office work 3 months to 3 years for other positions
Blue book traineeship	3 to 5 months (two possible staff rosters: March to end of July maximum or October to end of February)
Internships at other institutions	According to regulations of the relevant institution, but principally similar conditions as for blue book traineeships
<i>Cabinet employees</i>	
Employees of the Slovak Appointee Cabinet	The term of office of the relevant Slovak Appointee
<i>Political nomination</i>	
Representatives of SR nominated by Slovak authorities (e.g. member of the European Commission, judge of the European Court of Justice, ESD Advocate General)	The term of office

Source: [www.mzv.sk](http://www.mzv.sk)

## Appointments by Slovak Authorities

### National experts

The appointments of National Experts (hereinafter referred to as “NE”) can in many ways positively influence all the organisations from various areas of economy, as this tool can be utilised in state, public or private sectors. NE appointments allow to strengthen the capacity of Slovak organisations in pan-European policy-making processes as national experts, returning to work in their domestic authorities, convey professional knowledge not only in a specific area from the European perspective, but also knowledge of the administration and management processes in the European Commission and other EU institutions, as well as contacts to employees of these organisations. Before they return, they represent the “focal point” in EU institutions for their Slovak colleagues and this way may provide assistance in drafting particular documents, as well as may give notice of free positions to potential EU job applicants. On the other hand, the knowledge they gain as national experts can increase their chances to be employed at EU institutions. Bearing in mind the scope of its influence we decided to describe this form of employment in the EU in detail.

National experts are experts from member states in a particular area<sup>3</sup>. In order to get the position they must compete with experts from all the other member states. The employees apply according to:

- Offers from EU institutions,
- Individual offers from EU institutions to relevant professionals or
- Positions a Member State negotiates with the respective EU institution.

<sup>3</sup> Including research and development experts appointed to work for EU institutions.

The entire communication between the relevant Slovak organisation and the EU is managed by the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter referred to only as “MZV SR”) and the Slovak PR to the EU in Brussels. Each month the European Commission is sending information about free positions for NE to the relevant PR and they forward the information following national regulations. PR delivers the information to MZV SR and MZV SR mails it to Central Government Authorities. These, based on their decision, can forward the information to organisations in their sector. The potential organisation to appoint NE can choose a candidate via internal selection procedure. The chosen candidate is announced to PR and PR sends the appointment to the European Commission (DG ADMIN). DG ADMIN subsequently informs the relevant organisation about the selection results via PR. The chosen NE must be approved by the recruiting EU institution.

NE should be primarily employed in the state administration, but can be appointed by other organisations as well (public, private, NGO). The prerequisite each organisation must follow is that the employer will, during the time of the appointment, cover the costs of employee’s salary and social and health insurance in Slovakia. The EU institution NE is working for also pays the expatriation allowance in the place where NE is employed.

The rules to appoint national experts are laid down in the following documents: “*The Proposed Rules Applicable to Slovak National Experts Secondment to the European Union*” approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 723/2004 from 14th July 2004, and “*The Revised Rules and Procedures Applicable to Slovak National Experts and Trainees to the European Union institutions*” approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 24/2007 from 10th January 2007. Appointing a national expert employed in the state administration is carried out according to Article 34, Chapter 4 of the State Service Act No. 312/2001 as amended. The reinstatement of a state servant follows Article 35, Chapter 1, which states that the employee should be reinstated to the same state service department and position when returning to office. The appointment of national experts who were not state servants prior to the selection process follows the Public Service Act No. 552/2003 and the respective provisions of the Labour Code (for details see “*The Proposed Rules Applicable to Slovak National Experts Secondment to the European Union*” approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 723/2004 from 14th July 2004).

Despite applicable legislation amendments it is not completely trouble-free to reinstate an employee after the term of NE secondment. It is important for the national organisation to secure appropriate job position where the former NE could effectively utilise all of the gained experience and contacts. At the same time, it is necessary to resolve the potential issue of binding appointed employees to return and work for their national institutions for a certain period of time or to partly cover the costs of their secondment. This commitment should not be seen as any sanction or discouraging element, i.e. it should not be unreasonably strict, otherwise it could deter people from applying for NE positions. It should be designed to protect employees (to get an appropriate position) as well as employers (to receive back part of their investments).

There is a continual increase in interest in this type of appointment and it surpasses the initial expectations of MZV SR. MZV SR, based on comparisons with other member states predicted Slovakia to have 20 national experts under ideal conditions, while the realistic estimation was 10<sup>4</sup>. The MZV SR estimates were already reached in 2005. For details see Chart No. 2 below.

**Table No. 2: National experts 2004 - 2007**

Date, the figure refers to	Number of national experts (NE)	Number of institutions	NE from Central Government Agencies	Number of institutions	NE from other state administration authorities	Number of institutions	NE from universities, the Slovak Academy of Science and other R&D organisations	Number of institutions	NE from other organisations apart from state and public administration (private sector, NGOs, etc.)
31. 12. 2004	10	9	5	5	3	2	2	2	0
10. 6. 2005	19	14	7	6	7	3	5	5	0
31. 12. 2006	32	23	13	11	11	4	8	8	0
31. 3. 2007	30	22	12	10	9	3	9	8	0

Source: www.mzv.sk, valid to 30. 06. 2007

<sup>4</sup> Report submitted to the Decree No. 723/2004 from 14th July 2004 approved by the Slovak Government.



In the EU budget this year resources for approximately 700 – 750 NE free positions have been allocated to all the member states, which means that Slovakia has filled 4 % of all NE positions so far. The current result of Slovakia is very good, compared to the target numbers of Officials at the European Commission allocated to Slovakia (1,4 % of all the employees) which we have not filled yet and also compared to the current proportion of Slovaks in all EU institutions (1,3 %). The number is also optimistic if compared with the Czech Republic with doubled number of inhabitants and having only 26 NE<sup>5</sup>.

Table No. 2 shows the division of NE into 4 groups, according to the type of appointing institution: the Group of Central Government Authorities, the Group of Other State Administration Authorities, the Group of Universities, SAV (the Slovak Academy of Science) and Other R&D Organisations and the Group of Other Institutions. The majority of national experts from all groups were appointed by the Government Office, having 5 NE since May 2006, 4 of them work at DG Translation in Luxembourg. The highest rate of secondments in one group compared to other organisations (see table No. 2 above) has the Slovak Statistical Office (hereinafter referred to only as “SSO”), appointing 2 NE (one of them in 2003) already in the first monitored year (2004) out of three in the Group of Other State Administration Authorities. One additional NE was appointed the following year leaving SSO with 3 out of seven NE in 2005 and 3 out of 11 NE in 2006 in the relevant group. All of the NE were seconded to Eurostat. This year SSO has only 2 NE after 1 being reinstated. According to MZV SR, the public sector and universities show bigger interest in NE positions than the one the state administration. In addition, three NE from the Slovak Hydrometeorologic Institute were appointed, two of them are in the same institution (the European Environment Agency) working in identical professional fields (climate changes). Except for these, there are four other institutions with two NE appointed simultaneously and other organisations with only one appointed NE.

We presume that NE assignments should be more diverse in the amount of appointing institutions and in the amount of recruiting institutions, i.e. to decrease the number of NE from one institution seconded to one position and to appoint more NE from various organisations instead. The EU knowledge and experience rather than being concentrated only to few places should, in our opinion, be shared more equally by different organisations.

Table No. 2 also shows that other institutions, e.g. the private sector or NGOs, have not appointed any NE so far. One of the reasons might be the fact that these organisations do not know about the possibility, since there is no direct information forwarded from MZV SR (see the part of the report describing current MZV SR activities). Apparently there are better information channels among Central Government Authorities, universities and the research centres.

Eight NE appointments have already been ended. In two cases it was due to the expired term of office, three NE were recruited to work at EU institutions (statutory position at the Joint Research Centre, EU official, contract agent) and in one case the appointment ended due to employer's inability to pay the salary and contributions for NE (see below). In two remaining cases there were no financial means allocated from the General Treasury Administration to extend the secondment. Information regarding all NE, the appointing institutions and the time of appointment are in Annex 1.

National experts should, according to *“The Revised Rules and Procedures Applicable to Slovak National Experts and Interns to EU institutions”*, be selected in accordance with *“The Priorities of SR in Seconding National Experts and Trainees to EU institutions”*. The list of set priorities is in Annex 2 of the report. In view of the fact that these priorities were approved only recently (January 2007) and knowing that NE appointments require several months of preparation, it is impossible to evaluate the compatibility of NE appointments with the priorities. The priorities were defined by individual ministries, therefore it should be easy to follow them during the process of NE appointments. Problems might occur in case of potential appointing institutions, which did not take part in their creation (private sector, regions, towns and NGOs). Considering the priorities to be fairly general, we assume that no such situation should occur. In any case, monitoring and evaluation of the priority impacts on NE secondments should be carried out in a timeframe of one year.

Based on the Government Decree No. 723/2004 to *“Proposals to Actions in the process of National Experts Secondment to the EU institutions”*, the Slovak Ministry of Finance (hereinafter referred to only as “MF SR”) allocates each year from the General Treasury Administration chapter financial resources in the amount of

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/default.asp?id=38649&ido=17433&idj=1&amb=3&ParentIDO=14221>

4.200.000 Sk, to bridge the period after NE secondment. These resources should cover the costs of salaries and contributions of NE substitutes in Slovakia in the time of NE appointments. It is subsequently expected from each institution to include the related costs in their budgets. In justified cases it is possible to ask for additional funding from the budget to extend NE appointment, if the relevant recruiting EU institution asks for it. This allocated amount can be used to finance salaries and contributions of NE substitutes in the home country; according to the existing regulations it is not allowed to use these resources for more than 10 NE substitutes. Since January 2007 it is possible to apply for a grant, if the NE appointment is in accordance with priorities of SR approved in the Government Decree No. 24/2007. The compliance with the priorities and other provisions applicable to NE secondments is approved by MZV SR together with MF SR, as it was the case before. The following table shows that the financial means to support NE appointments has never been fully utilised.

**Table No. 3: Utilisation of financial means from the General Treasury Administration chapter in 2004 – 2006**

Organisation	Number of national experts	Amount used	The share in % of the total allocated sum (4.200.000 Sk) in rounded numbers
<b>Year 2004</b>			
National Security Office	1 national expert	122 000 Sk	
<b>Total sum disbursed in 2004</b>		<b>122 000 Sk</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Year 2005</b>			
National Security Office	2 national experts	839 000 Sk	
Ministry of Interior SR	1 national expert	252 000 Sk	
Government Office SR	1 national expert	245 845 Sk	
Slovak Statistical Office	2 national experts	538 530 Sk	
Slovak Academy of Science	1 national expert	297 000 Sk	
<b>Total sum disbursed in 2005</b>		<b>2 172 375 Sk</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Year 2006</b>			
Slovak Academy of Science	1 national expert	249 000 Sk	
Ministry of Education SR	1 national expert	113 000 Sk	
Ministry of finance SR	1 national expert	210 000 Sk	
<b>Total sum disbursed in 2006</b>		<b>572 000 Sk</b>	<b>14%</b>

Source: "The Report on Personal Representation of SR at EU Institutions in 2006", approved by the Government Decree No. 421/2007 from 09/05/2007.

Despite the fact that the allocated financial means to support NE appointments have never been fully disbursed, in 2006 with only 14 % of available means utilised, there was a case of an employer who did not approve the extension of NE appointment for financial reasons. In other case in 2006 there were no financial means provided for the extension of NE appointment from the Government Office, since they were already granted in 2005. The Government Office apparently did find additional funding at the end; according to the current list of appointed NE, this particular secondment has been extended to 15 February 2009.

Three applications has been rejected in 2007 (SAV, MŠ SR, MF SR), since the funding was already granted in 2006. Only one request for NE from MF SR has yet been approved in 2007. In 3 cases out of 4 the secondment ended/will end for the reason of no additional funding from the General Treasury Administration.

Taking into consideration the amount of disbursed finances, we think the number of rejected requests to be fairly high. The utilisation of these means needs to be reviewed in order to support the appointment of highest possible number of people to EU institutions.



## Structural traineeship

Structural traineeships serve the state administration employees and are carried out within the European Commission structures. The number of structural traineeships is being approved every 6 months and reflects the requirements of the individual Member States. Slovakia has currently 2 traineeships every 6 months. The offers for a particular position come from the European Commission to PR, which sends them to MZV SR and MZV SR subsequently forwards the offers to all the departments. The interest in such traineeships is constantly low. The main reason for that, as stated by the state administration institutions, is the financial burden – salaries and contributions (both in Slovakia and Brussels) - the appointing institution must carry. While in 2005 there were five people participating in structural traineeship programmes, in 2006 there were only three. The issue of traineeship funding should be resolved strategically, as it offers a good possibility to acquire experience in working for EU institutions.

The process of appointing employees to structural traineeships is laid down in the “*The Revised Rules and Procedures Applicable to Slovak National Experts and Interns Secondment to EU institutions*” approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 24/2007 from 10 January 2007. Nevertheless, there have been various interpretations of the State Service Act No. 131/2001 as amended. Certain departments presume employees, taking part in such traineeships, should be obliged to remain in the state service after their return for a certain period of time or to refund part of their expenses (see Article 77, Chapter 4 of the State Service Act No. 312/2001 as amended). Other departments claim such obligation is not viable. This situation requires a solution in order to eliminate one of the possible barriers of sending state servants to traineeships.

## Other Traineeship Programmes

Apart from structural traineeships, the Slovaks have also worked as specialists, experts and interns at other EU institutions, funded by the European Commission grants<sup>6</sup>. In 2006 there were three of such traineeships and in 2007 there's been seven of them already, with the National Bank of Slovakia and the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development being the most active – both of them had two such traineeships.

## Employment by the EU

An employee working for an EU institution is a person who successfully passes EU selection procedures and receives a salary with all the relevant allowances from the EU. The job position, job description, the conditions of employment, salaries and allowances of an employee working at EU institutions are laid down in “*The Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of European Communities*”, from 5 March 1968 amended by the Council Regulation No. 723 from 22 March 2004, valid from 1 May 2004. It is vital for each Member State to have the highest possible number of employees working at EU institutions because the network of contacts, if being efficient, is a significant source of information exchange between national administrations and EU institutions (*The Report on Staffing Servant Positions at EU institutions*, approved by the decree No. 642/2004 from 30 June 2004, p. 4).

**Table No. 4: EU employees**

	EU	Slovakia
EU institutions	39 000	500
European Commission (EC)	27 000	216
EC Officials	20 000	152

Source: [www.mzv.sk](http://www.mzv.sk) and the employees of the Department for Internal Affairs and EU Institutions at MZV SR, updated in May 2007

<sup>6</sup> For more details see the Report on Personal Representation of SR at EU institutions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 704/2006 from 30. 8. 2006 and the Report on Personal Representation of SR at EU institutions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 421/2007 from 9. 5. 2007.

### Temporary Agent

Recruitment procedures and the mandate of temporary agents are laid down in the abovementioned Regulation from 5 March 1968, amended by the Council Regulation No. 723 from 22 March 2004, as labour for a limited period of time. Temporary agent positions have several advantages. Firstly, if temporary agents decide to return to Slovakia, they become the source of information about EU functioning and provide contacts to EU servants. In case former temporary agents decide to work for EU institutions, they can become a part of the SR-EU network of contacts. Information about temporary agent selections are at PR, on the European Personal Selection Office web site (hereinafter “EPSO”) and at relevant DGs recruiting temporary agents. It is a short-term, very specific position, which cannot be filled with people in the EPSO database or a position in the Commissioner’s Cabinet (see below).

### Contract Agent

Recruitment procedures and the mandate of contract agents are also laid down in the abovementioned Regulation from 5 March 1968, amended by the Council Regulation No. 723 from 22 March 2004. Alike temporary agents, even contract jobs have various advantages. Firstly, if contract agents decide to return to Slovakia, they become the source of information about EU functioning and provide contacts to EU servants. In case former contract agents decide to work for EU institutions, they can become a part of the SR-EU network of contacts. The contract agent applicants apply via EPSO. Contract agents might work manually or as office assistants. The other type of work includes substituting an EU employee who cannot exercise the duties for a longer period of time (in case of illness, maternity leave, etc.) or helping to overcome the lack of work force due to a sudden work overload. Contract agents can also carry out very specific professional tasks, if there are no such professionals in the current EU staff.

### Blue Book Traineeships and Other Traineeship Programmes at EU Institutions

The traineeships are directly organised by relevant EU institutions. The participation in such traineeship programmes is conditioned by finishing at least the first level of Higher Education. The number of trainees depends on the size of the country. In total, the European Commission offers annually about 630 traineeships<sup>7</sup>. They represent an essential tool, which needs to be promoted, since there are almost no costs, plus the Slovaks already have sufficient staff in management positions (see below) to employ Blue Book trainees in their departments. Based on the interviews we had the Slovak EC managers still wish to attract more Slovak trainees to work in their departments.

**Table No. 5 European Commission Blue Book Traineeships in 2006 – 2007**

	<b>Begin in March 2006 (applied in September 2005)</b>	<b>Begin in October 2006 (applied in March 2006)</b>	<b>Total 2006</b>	<b>Begin in March 2007 (applied in September 2006)</b>	<b>Begin in October 2007 (applied in March 2007)</b>	<b>Total 2007</b>
<b>Applicants</b>	50	62	112	61	71	132
<b>Admitted</b>	6	10	16	11	NA <sup>8</sup>	NA

*Source: Document approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 421/2007 from 9 May 2007*

We can be satisfied that the number of applicants and interns has a slightly increasing tendency (see Table No. 5). Slovakia is successful in taking about 2,5% of possible Blue Book traineeship positions, which is more than our target number for EC officials (1,4%). However, the number of applicants and actual Blue Book trainees still represents a very low proportion of Slovak university graduates (see Table No.6 below).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.mfa.sk/zu/index/podstranka.php?id=3475>

<sup>8</sup> This figure is still not available, the assignment of trainees is still in progress.

**Table No.6 Number of EC Blue Book traineeship applicants compared to the total number of university graduates**

	2005	2006	2007
<b>Applicants</b>	NA	112	132
<b>Graduates of 1. and 2. Level of Higher Education</b>	30 744	34 228	NA
<b>Proportion of applicants to the total number of university graduates in %<sup>9</sup></b>		0,36	0,39

*Source: Document approved by the Slovak Government in Decree No. 421/2007 from 9 May 2007, Higher Education Annual Report 2005, Higher Education Annual Report 2006*

Apart from Blue Book traineeships, there are opportunities to participate in other traineeship programmes of other EU institutions (EU Council, the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of Regions, the European Ombudsman, the European Data Protection Supervisor). Applications and the duration of traineeships are regulated by relevant organisation. In most cases, the situation is similar to Blue Book traineeships, with traineeship programmes from 3 to 5 months, beginning in March and October. Certain traineeships are free of charge, the others not. More information about traineeship programmes is available on web sites of the relevant institutions. Links to these institutions can be also found on PR web site (<http://www.mfa.sk/zu/index/podstranka.php?id=3475>).

As part of all traineeship programmes the successful applicants must actively search for their places of assignment. In some cases even a successful candidate does not have to be assigned to a particular position. The database of candidates is namely about three times bigger than the list of free positions. Therefore, the communication with Slovaks at EU institutions is essential as it can help in finding assignments for successful applicants.

### EU Officials

EU employees or EU Officials working in relevant EU institutions are currently divided into two basic categories: Administrator (hereinafter “AD”) and Assistant (hereinafter “AST”). The group of AD is subdivided into 12 grades and includes administrative, advisory, linguistic and research positions. The AST group is further divided into 11 grades and combines executive, technical and secretarial positions. Each grade consists of 5 steps. Steps can be upgraded every two, grades every 10 years. The upgrades can be achieved quicker, if the employee receives a highly positive evaluation carried out every two years.

Management positions at EU institutions are as follows:

Senior Management:

- Director-General AD 16 and AD 15,
- Deputy Director General AD 15,
- Director AD 15 – AD 14.

Middle Management:

- Head of Unit AD 14 – AD 9.

To preserve geographical equality after EU accession, the European Commission decided to establish reference quotas for new Member States. Each Member States is supposed to reach these target numbers by the end of 2010. Up until then, the majority of selection procedures will be focused on new Member States. Slovakia has the chance in the foreground to acquire 279 of 3341 such positions allocated to new Member States. Table No. 7 below shows the division of Slovak reference quotas, according to each category.

<sup>9</sup> Applicants to apply for traineeships in 2006 are compared to the number of graduates in 2005 and applicants in 2007 to 2006 graduates. Trainees apply at least 6 months before the programme, therefore the number represents graduates from the previous year.

**Table no. 7 Reference quotas allocated to Slovakia divided into particular categories**

	<b>The target in 2010</b>	<b>Current situation</b>
<b>AD15 (Director-General, Deputy Director General)<sup>10</sup></b>	1	0
<b>AD 14 (Director, Advisor)</b>	3	2
<b>AD 9 – AD 13</b>	15	7
<b>AD 8 – AD 5, AST</b>	260	143
<b>Total</b>	279	152

Source: [www.mzv.sk](http://www.mzv.sk), last upgraded on 31/05/2007

By defining reference quotas for new Member States, the European Commission considered the total number of inhabitants, the number of votes in the Council and the number of seats in the European Parliament. It is important for Slovakia to fully utilise the assigned quotas before we will have to compete with old Member States after 2010, including Romania and Bulgaria after 2012. By then, there will be about 60.000 candidates on average predicted to apply for EU positions.

### **Selection Procedures**

All selection procedures are fairly cumbersome and last for a year (and more) and it can take several months to find the appropriate position. The trial period lasts 9 months and only afterwards a permanent contract can be signed. It happens very rarely that the permanent contract is not signed after the trial period. The interest among the Slovaks in working at EU institutions is reasonably large, concerning mainly lower level positions. The main motivation for applying to work at EU institutions is, according to our respondent, a higher living standard, the opportunity to work in an international environment and some of them also mentioned better career prospects in the area of European integration than in the domestic public or state administration.

#### *Lower Level Positions*

The selection procedures vary according to the type of position. AST 1 – AST 5 and AD 5 to AD 8 positions require open competitions, organised and carried out by EPSO. An open competition consists of three main parts: tests to prove EU knowledge, professional knowledge as well as verbal and numeric reasoning. The next part is the essay, where applicant's ability to understand and analyse the given topic as well as to summarise the thoughts is observed. The final part involves the oral interview with members of the examination board to test the ability to speak in foreign language as well as the communication and presentation skills. Successful candidates appear on the EPSO reserve list and are obliged to actively search for a vacant position in a particular institution. As in the case of traineeship programmes, also here the active search is important, since the reserve lists are only temporary and not every listed candidate will find a position at EU institutions. It is about 85 – 90 % of the applicants from the EPSO database, which will finally be recruited. During the active search for employment, information about vacant positions is essential – such information can be spread via the network of Slovaks in Brussels. Most of our respondents confirmed that the Hungarian citizens successfully use such a network to disseminate these pieces of information.

The interviews we carried out show that selection procedures for lower level positions are perceived by successful candidates as not very relevant for their work, their role is mainly to reduce the number of applicants. Sometimes the job assigned afterwards is not as challenging as the selection procedure itself. The fairly limited relation to future work is obvious in case of lower level positions, as people are not selected to a specific position, but are only included in the general database and can be positioned almost anywhere.

As revealed in Table No. 7, Slovakia still has 117 positions to fill by the end of 2010, i.e. that we have covered 55% in the first half of the transition period. There are still people in EPSO database and approximately 7 more selection procedures planned for 2007 and 2008 (Forward planning, planned selection procedures published on 24. 5. 2007 at [http://europa.eu/epso/competitions/forward-planning-24-05\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu/epso/competitions/forward-planning-24-05_en.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> New Member States did not receive quotas in AD 16 category.

In order to reach the reference numbers it is indispensable to eliminate the weaknesses the Slovaks are constantly facing. Several areas were identified by our respondents and by the EPSO analysis<sup>11</sup>, in which Slovaks were less productive than the applicants from other countries. The most important are essay writing and the active search for a particular position. Essays are a problem because our educational system does not prepare students for this type of activity and essay writing is a skill that cannot be taught in a simple course. The active search is not only an issue involving an active approach, but also self-promoting skills for the interview. Many Slovak applicants are fresh university graduates, having very little experience in handling a job interview. Yet again, presentation skills do not belong to subjects taught at schools. The same applies to verbal and numeric reasoning. It is not even included in our curricula, therefore it requires special training.

We should by no means underestimate the selection procedures applied to lower level positions, not only meaning those lasting until 2010, but all in general. The public service in the EU is a complex system of hierarchy where promotions to higher positions are achieved from the inside rather than from the outside.

### *Middle Management (AD 9 – AD 13)*

The selection procedures for middle management positions are also carried out by EPSO. The middle management positions (AST 6 and up) are usually selected internally and only rarely in open competitions. This, of course, will apply to Slovakia only after 2010. In the meantime, the selection procedures in new Member States are carried out in forms of open competitions. The selection procedure for middle management positions consists of three main parts. The first part includes verbal and numeric reasoning tests. In the second part, applicants must prove their information processing and management skills, as well as knowledge in the HR area. The last part - oral interview - examines general knowledge and professional experience. As in the case of the lower level selections, the successful candidates for middle management positions are listed in EPSO reserve lists and must actively seek a particular vacant position in one of the EU institutions. The problems at this stage are similar to those mentioned in the previous chapter. The Slovak candidates for middle management positions experience the same difficulties with self-promotion.

**Table No. 8: Comparing the target quota and the state of affairs as of July 2007 in the EU 10<sup>12</sup>**

AD	CY		CZ		EE		HU		LT		LV		MT		PL		SI		SK	
	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	Target	Status	aim	state
<b>15</b>	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	0
<b>14</b>	1	3	6	2	1	3	6	7	3	2	2	2	1	1	16	7	2	1	3	3
<b>9–13</b>	6	11	27	11	6	7	27	21	13	11	9	10	5	8	74	26	7	6	15	7

CY – Cyprus, CZ – Czech Republic, EE – Estonia, HU – Hungary, LT –Lithuania, LV – Latvia, MT – Malta, PL – Poland, SI – Slovenia, SK - Slovakia

Source: COMREF 21/05/2007, Statistical Bulletin 7/2006 and the Report on Staffing Secretarial Positions in EU institutions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 642/2004 from 30 June 2004

Middle management seems to be the most difficult for Slovakia, since we have still not reached the half of the reference numbers. The international comparisons in Table No. 8 show that only the Czechs are in the same situation as Slovaks, the Poles are doing even worse. However, there are countries, which managed to exceed their reference numbers - Cyprus, exceeding them twice, followed by Malta, Latvia and Estonia.

Besides the numbers, the problems in middle management staffing were also confirmed in the interviews we carried out during the project. One of the concerns might be the fact that we have to compete with the rest of the new Member States, accessing the EU with Slovakia in May 2004 (hereinafter “EU 10”). Table No. 8

<sup>11</sup> The letter of Erik Halskov, the Director of EPSO, to Mr. Maroš Ševčovič, the Slovak Ambassador to the EU from 18. 5. 2006.

<sup>12</sup> The table includes also temporary staff. General trends in staffing regarding these positions, as shown in the table, are relevant and there are no other figures available, therefore we use only these figures in our report.



proves that the new Member States are more successful than the Slovaks. The selection procedures are jointly evaluated and only the most successful candidates enter the database. So far, EPSO is planning three more open competitions for AD 9/AD 12 in 2007 – 2008 and there are still Slovaks in the EPSO database, so there is the space for increasing the numbers of Slovaks in middle management positions by the end of the transition period.

Taking into consideration the very low success rate of Slovaks regarding middle management, it is essential to focus on finding solutions to current failures. It was mentioned several times in the interviews we recorded that one of the reasons is the lack of well-educated people willing to participate in such cumbersome admission tests with a very indefinite ending. In a dynamically growing economy, such as the Slovak, there are many opportunities for skilled people to achieve management positions in the private sector much faster. The second problem was that such EU positions already require support of the country of origin. On the other hand, it happens quite often that information about candidates applying for the position is missing, hence it is impossible to support them. The third problematic area is, as in the case of lower level positions, the lack of self-presentation at oral interviews.

One of the possibilities is to use the list of candidates for middle and senior management positions managed by MZV SR. The problem is also that there is no conceptual training for these positions, as opposed to lower level positions. The issue of filling middle management positions in the transition period requires special attention because, as we have already mentioned, after 2010 there will be almost no chance to fill a middle management position from the outside.

### *Senior Management*

Regarding AD 14 and AD 15 positions, the selection procedures are organised by DG ADMIN and the relevant Directorates and Commissioners. They examine primarily the individual skills, expertise, management skills evaluated by the evaluation centre and the acceptance of the candidate by the European Commission. The selection might have a form of an open competition or a different form, chosen by the selection board of the given institution. Selection procedures follow the same design:

- Selecting candidates by DG ADMIN based on technical criterion,
- Registration appraisal by a special selection board, interviews with the board
- Candidates for AD 14 – also part of the written tests
- Detailed evaluation report of the special selection board assessing candidates
- Consultative Committee on Appointments (hereinafter “CCA”) – issuing its initial position to the ranking of candidates
- Evaluation centre with applicants, managed by a private company,
- Chosen candidates – taking part in interviews with CCA members
- CCA – issuing its final position to each candidate
- Candidates selected by CCA – interviews with individual (one or more) members of the European Commission Board or an appropriate body of the institution the candidate is applying to,
- The European Commission, based on recommendations from the HR Chairman and after the approval from the President of the Commission and the relevant Commissioner, issues the final decision.

The two vacant higher management positions (one AD 14 and one AD 15) have a similar explanation as the unfilled middle management positions. In case of senior management the problem of getting first-class candidates for such positions is even more obvious. The candidates, besides proving excellent knowledge, must have a clear support of the state's highest representatives and the Slovak EU Commissioner, as the home country support in such positions is inevitable.

The international comparisons (table No. 8) show that Slovakia, regarding higher management positions, proves to have average results. Cyprus and Hungary exceeded their target numbers both in AD 14 and AD 15. The Czechs and the Poles have also exceeded their target numbers in AD 15, although Poland is the country with the biggest problems in reaching the assigned reference numbers. Table no. 8 also includes temporary agents, such as the Head of Commissioner's Cabinet, serving only a limited term of office, and therefore it is clear that we still have our AD 14 target numbers unfilled. Slovakia, as we can see, did not exceed the target numbers in any of the categories.

The process of selecting candidates for management positions was highly evaluated in the interviews, especially the methods used to assess candidate's management skills (both in competitions for middle and higher management positions). According to our respondents, the system is well designed to reveal capabilities or incompetence of applicants as managers. In the context of the highest grade (AD 14) the individuals we interviewed had personal experience with, the selections were considered to be more closely connected to a concrete position, which was also described as being positive.

New Member States have not been assigned any reference quota for AD 16 positions, but in the future we will be applying for these positions as well, therefore we briefly describe the selection procedures for these positions. In case of AD 16 position the selection is organised by the appropriate Directorate recruiting the applicant. The board formed at this particular DG does the pre-selection of candidates, based on their expertise and experience and creates a list of three or four applicants recommended to pass to the next stage. These applicants are then assessed by CCA, which at this stage evaluates primarily management and leadership skills. CCA forwards to the respected Commissioner. The CCA evaluation is only consultative to the Commissioner. The Commissioner's proposal needs to be approved by the European Commission board. Before the Commissioner makes the suggestion and presents it to the Board, it is necessary for a candidate to receive support from the home country.

Filling the management positions in the EU institutions is, from a long-term perspective, crucial, as such EU officials can help the Slovaks to acquire lower level positions in relevant institutions. Senior management positions need to be filled until 2010 to benefit from the transition period, before Slovakia will have to compete with other Member States.

From the interviews we can conclude that the ability to pass a selection procedures is higher by individuals who have studied or worked abroad. This applies to all the positions, from the lower level to senior management. The fact that the EU job applicants have previously worked in Brussels or directly in the institutions during the open competition or its planning seems to be another benefit. These candidates already had the chance to:

- learn the EU background which helped them to be better prepared for tests, oral interviews, they could improve their communication skills and learn the EU language,
- participate in training programmes organised by SFIE, considered by most of our respondents as very positive and
- find employment easier, as they could take part in many interviews without being required to travel to Brussels or Luxembourg.

## Employment by the Cabinet of Slovak Appointee

**Table No. 9: Overview of specific cabinets**

Cabinet of	Cabinet structure	Current state in number of Slovaks in the cabinet
The EU Commissioner(Ján Figel)	7 members of AD grade(max. 3 from SR), 11 of AST grade (max. 2 temporary agents)	3 AD 3 AST (1 one from them is EU Official) 5 trainees from Slovakia on Blue Book traineeships 0 structural trainees
Judge, Court of Justice (Ján Klučka)	3 lawyers (AD), 3 assistants (AST), driver  note: excellent French and good English language knowledge required	1 lawyer, 1 secretary 2 trainees - organising visits for app.25 students + teacher per year
Advocate General, Court of Justice (Ján Mazák) term of office only until 2012, next term in 2056	3 lawyers (AD), 3 assistants (AST), driver  note: excellent French and good English language knowledge required	1 lawyer, 1 assistant

<sup>13</sup> The authors of the report have no information available about the trainees.

Judge, The Court of First Instance (Daniel Šváby)	3 lawyers (AD), 2 assistants (AST)  note: excellent French, English and good German language knowledge required	1 lawyer, 1 assistant <sup>13</sup>
Member of the European Court of Auditors (Július Molnár)	2 attachés (AD), 2 assistants (AST)  note: excellent French and English language knowledge required	1 attaché (AD), 1 assistant (AST) 4 trainees
Members of the European Parliament (14 MEPs)	1 – 4 assistant in the cabinet (56 in total)  note: English language knowledge required as the minimum	27 cabinet members, nearly all of them are Slovak citizens <sup>13</sup>

*Source: Report on Staffing EU administrative positions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 642 from 30 June 2004, [www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/assistantAlphaOrderByMep.do?letter=K&language=SK](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/assistantAlphaOrderByMep.do?letter=K&language=SK) and data from the cabinets.*

The staffing in cabinets is designed by the appointed Member State representatives. Table No. 9 compares the potential numbers of cabinet members with the present staffing situation with respect to the Slovak citizens.

The cabinet of the EU Commissioner employees the highest number of servants. Minimum 3 out of 7 cabinet members of AD grade should be from Commissioner's country of origin and maximum three employees could be temporary agents. The Head of Cabinet and the Deputy Head should come from different countries. 11 positions are of AST 1 – 11 grades, with no defined proportion of Slovak and servants from other Member States. According to relevant regulations only two of them can be temporary agents, with the rest being the EU officials.

Commissioner's Cabinet is entitled to one Blue Book trainee and one structural trainee in every 6 months. To date, the Slovak Commissioner Cabinet has fully benefited from this advantage, having 6 Blue Book trainees, 5 Slovaks and 1 Czech. Regarding structural traineeships, the Cabinet has had only two trainees, planning to accept another one in the near future. None of the trainees was from Slovakia. The reason is the decreasing interest in structural traineeships due to the high costs, as it was already mentioned in the chapter on structural traineeships. On the other hand, citizens do not know they could be fairly easily accepted to traineeships in the Cabinet, so they do not make any efforts. It would be definitely to raise the awareness in this field. As the cabinet is being designed, applicants who passed the selection procedures of AST grades and are listed on EPSO reserve lists should certainly use the opportunity to be recruited.

The other Slovak cabinets in the European institutions are those at the European Court of Justice (hereinafter "ECJ"), including the Cabinet of the Advocate General and the Cabinet of the Judge of the Court of First Instance. Slovakia also has a cabinet at the Court of Auditors and the cabinets of the Members of the European Parliament. In all of these cabinets the Slovak representative are entitled to select the servants, regardless of nationality, but with excellent French language skills. The ECJ Judge is allowed to choose 3 lawyers, 3 assistants and a driver. The same applies to the Cabinet of ECJ Advocate General. The Judge at the Court of First instance has the right to employ 3 lawyers and 2 assistants, who also need to prove excellent French language skills and the Slovak member of the Court of Auditors delegates 2 members of the cabinet and 2 assistants.

Despite the fact that the positions in ECJ cabinets can be filled regardless of nationality, the demanding language requirements reasonably reduce the selection of Slovak specialists. Excellent French is indispensable and moreover at least good English is required as many annexes to the proceedings are in English and not all of them are translated automatically. Sometimes also German language is necessary. It is worth mentioning that the ECJ Advocate-General is entitled to choose the language of the legal proceedings, including the mother tongue. The language of the Advocate General influences the process of staffing. The Slovak appointed Advocate General, Mr. Ján Mazák, decided to use the English language.

As a consequence of fairly high requirements the cabinets employ specialists from different countries. The Judges, the Advocate General and the Member of the Court of Auditors thus have only one Slovak citizen of AD grade and one of AST grade. All the cabinets are currently having full staff, but they do accept trainees, although, according to cabinet staff members, there are only few trainees interested. In the discussions we had with the employees of all of the abovementioned cabinets, including the staff of Mr. Figel's Cabinet, they mentioned they would like to see more trainees from Slovakia and intensify the co-operation with Slovak



universities. It is especially important to fully benefit from the present situation in the Cabinet of the Advocate General, as there are only eight Advocates General at ECJ. Five of them are always appointed by the large Member States (Germany, France, Italy, United Kingdom and Spain) and the remaining positions are shared between other member states by the system of rotation. Mr. Mazák will serve as the Advocate General until 2012. The next turn for Slovakia to appoint its Advocate General will be in 2056.

Slovakia has 14 Members of the European Parliament (hereinafter “EP”). The MEPs are entitled to have 1 to 4 assistants, i.e. 56 in total. At the moment they only have 27, which is less than half of the number of potential assistants. For example, Mr. Sergej Kozlík, according to the EP web site, does not have any assistants<sup>14</sup>.

The term of employment for all the cabinet workers, assuming that they do not successfully pass an EU selection procedure, is limited by the term of office of the particular MEP.

The Slovaks have the possibility to work in all of the abovementioned cabinets, either as servants (at the time of cabinet’s creation) or as trainees (every year). As we have already mentioned, the previous experience in the EU institutions increases the possibility to pass a selection procedure and to become an EU official. Therefore, it is essential to use the opportunity to work in of the cabinets of the Slovak MEPs.

## **Political Appointments**

Political nominations affect only a small group of individuals, therefore we do not devote much time to describe them. Political nominations involve the following EU institutions and positions:

- the European Commissioner
- Judges of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance
- Members of the European Court of Auditors
- Representatives of the European Central Bank (for members of the Eurozone)
- Representatives of the European Investment Bank
- Members of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities
- Members of the Council of Regions
- Representatives of the Eurojust

Political nominations have a positive influence on the nominees, but they can be of wider relevance. As in the case of other temporary positions in the EU institutions, even here the political nominees, due to gathered experience, increase their chances to succeed in EU selection procedures. In addition, they occupy fairly important positions and can establish contacts helping them to seek and acquire a particular position. While being employed in the EU institutions as political nominees, they occupy reasonably influential positions and they can help other Slovaks, who are listed in EPSO reserve lists, to find a position. If they decide, after their term of office expires, to return to Slovakia, they convey the experience in EU policy-making, the EU environment and the contacts to EU officials. This can ultimately create a group of specialists, both in private and public sectors, who would understand the work of the EU institutions and co-operate with them efficiently, having the necessary experience.

## **Present Activities**

### **Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU in Brussels**

The employees of the Slovak Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels (hereinafter only “PR”) serve as particular Slovak Ministries and the Government’s “right arm” in Brussels. PR plays the main role in the communication between Slovakia and the EU institutions. In the human resources area, PR carries out several tasks. Some of them belong to its agenda (e.g. co-ordination of structural trainees and national expert appointments with DG ADMIN), others are own initiative actions (establishment of “focal points”, known as ‘liaisons’ in the relevant EU institutions). PR carries out activities supporting the selection of Slovaks applying

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<sup>14</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/assistantAlphaOrderByMep.do?letter=K&language-SK](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/assistantAlphaOrderByMep.do?letter=K&language-SK) – at this web site you can find accredited assistants in the European Parliament in alphabetical order.

for EU positions as well as manages contacts with people already employed in the EU institutions. In its actions PR has been inspired by countries where the systems of pursuing countrymen in the EU institutions and of finding and managing contacts with people already working in the institutions, is well established (e.g. Finland, Denmark, Ireland).

PR created a system of “focal points” – liaisons. Liaisons are Slovaks working in the EU institutions who should establish the link to other Slovaks in a particular institution. Each institution includes at least one liaison and the co-operation is based on the determination of the individual liaisons to preserve contacts with PR. Using liaisons, PR tries to supervise free positions for applicants listed in EPSO reserve lists and to monitor future activities of particular EU institution in relevant areas. In addition, PR is quarterly, after each Summit of the Council of the European Union (hereinafter only “Council”), providing information to liaisons about the outcomes of the Summit – the latest developments in the Council, Slovakia’s positions and achievements. Liaisons are supposed to forward this information to other Slovaks. The liaisons we interviewed considered the dissemination of summit information as highly useful, otherwise they would get them late or condensed. Germany is using the similar system of liaisons.

Apart from the network of liaisons, PR tries to establish and maintain contacts with all the Slovaks in the EU institutions, but not all of them favour the idea. PR has a list of about 450 E-mail addresses to EU employees. On the other hand, many of our respondents were not familiar with such PR activity or have never heard of the liaisons system. One of the liaisons did not even know that he is a liaison. It proves that these types of activities require proper explanation and sufficient information about their intentions and the aims of networking activities via available channels – PR web sites – so that the servants know who is liaison in the respective institution where they work, what is the role of a liaison, and where they can find additional information about this activity.

PR is interested in sharing information about vacant positions and about the different opinions of SR and the EU in various areas with Slovaks working in the EU institutions. During the interviews we discovered that many of the employees have never been contacted by PR or Slovak institutions regarding their agenda, even though they would welcome such collaboration. Here again, the activity of PR, trying to utilise the network of Slovaks in the EU institutions and to share expert information, does not get through to people who are willing and capable to co-operate.

On the subject of training programmes for Slovak citizens applying for EU jobs, PR co-operates with MZV SR in organising seminars and training for Slovak applicants and university students. PR participated in the process of planning training programmes for Heads of CGA (Central Government Authorities) HR Departments taking place in October 2006. This autumn, PR in collaboration with MZV prepares a similar activity for leaders of Heads of CGA Offices (for further details see the chapter describing MZV activities).

PR intends to help in pursuing Slovaks to management positions in the EU institutions. However, PR is often missing information about the applicants. One of the explanations in the interviews mentioned that people working in state or public administration perceived their applications as confidential, just to avoid any difficulties they might face up to concerning their desire to leave to Brussels. Generally, the departure to Brussels is not considered as being very positive. The applicants are also afraid to confront their colleagues, if they fail. The MZV Central Database can improve the situation. A targeted co-operation on training programmes for management positions can help to establish contacts and increase the level of confidence among MZV, PR and the applicants.

PR also informs MZV SR how Slovaks are progressing to meet the reference quota and to staff NE and trainee positions in the EU institutions. The information concerning the target numbers in the European Commission PR disseminates on a quarterly basis when it is provided by the EC to the PR. With regard to national experts, PR provides ad hoc information every time a new NE is accepted or a term of office of appointed NE is extended. Information about EC trainees is distributed after the deadline for applications (twice a year) and then ad hoc during the time the trainees are distributed to particular institutions. The total number of Slovaks in the EU institutions is updated once a year and subsequently send from PR to MZV.

SZ manages its own web site ([www.eubrussels.mfa.sk](http://www.eubrussels.mfa.sk)), providing information about the PR, EU job opportunities as well as contacts to some of the Slovaks in Brussels (Diplomatic missions, Slovak Members of the European Parliament, Slovak Commissioner, representatives of Slovak regions in Brussels and Slovak media correspondents).

However, the web site does not contain information that might support the activities of PR. For example, information about Slovaks in management positions in EU institutions that would help to establish contacts between applicants in EPSO reserve lists searching for a particular position and the relevant manager. There is also insufficient information about liaisons in particular institutions and the philosophy of networking. The site should also include the possibility for EU employees and other individuals interested in joining the PR mailing list. This is how PR could acquire more contacts to people willing to communicate with PR in various areas. Web site should also contain comprehensive data about PR.

Recently, PR is making efforts to establish PR as a cultural centre. They introduced “Films on Thursdays” in PR building, where Slovak films are screened. At various occasions PR also organises meetings of Slovaks employed in the EU institutions. Unfortunately, the film performances might only have a limited number of visitors, which is fairly low considering the fact that it's one of PR's few cultural events in Brussels for hundreds of Slovaks in who already live there.

While researching the documents, web sites or making interviews, we did not encounter any activities carried out by PR or MZV in collaboration with private sector or NGOs. As far as we know, there is no systematic co-operation in training programmes for EU job applicants (traineeships, national experts) with these stakeholders, and no co-operation in promoting their interests. We believe this is the area where PR and MZV should increase the number of activities in order to make the Slovak voice louder in the EU.

## **The Cabinet of the EU Commissioner Ján Figel'**

Concerning the fact that EU Commissioners should be European rather than national, the Cabinet does not carry out any official pro-Slovak activities. Commissioner Figel' invites the Slovaks in Brussels to informal meetings on state holidays. At the same time, he is also very interested in developments in Slovakia, having regular meetings with PR Ambassador, Mr. Šefčovič. One of the recurring points on their agenda always refers to the position of Slovaks in the EU institutions, including the progress of Slovakia in reaching the reference quota in particular institutions. Commissioner's intervention during senior management selection procedures is essential, being a common practice in other Member States as well. Many EU officials confirmed that the Hungarian Commissioner, Mr. László Kovács, is very active in this field, which may explain why Hungarians are extremely successful in filling the management positions (see Table No. 8).

## **Informal Activities**

Besides PR efforts, the Catholic Mission serves as a networking point in Brussels, uniting religious community. Some of the Slovaks working in Brussels for longer period of time, organise informal meetings for the “newcomers”.

In addition to these activities, the Slovaks meet in smaller groups based on personal acquaintance. After the EU accession, Slovaks working in the EU institutions used to meet with their Czech counterparts. As the number of Slovaks has increased (there are about 500 Slovaks in all the institutions, at the moment), the Slovaks have been meeting more with own countrymen. Although, the Czech Republic is much more active in cultural and social activities (Czechs also manage their Culture House), the Slovaks, considering the close cultural affinity, visit Czech events, which become the place for informal contacts.

## **Activities of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

While the Slovak Government Office mainly co-ordinates policies regarding EU agenda internally, i.e. with the Slovak ministries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of SR (hereinafter only “MZV”) took over the main initiatives in the field of Slovak HR policies in relation to the EU institutions. In addition to the abovementioned activities carried out in collaboration with PR, MZV co-ordinates the communication of our offices with PR in Brussels and carries out or supervises activities regarding training programmes for Slovak EU job applicants.

MZV is first of all the “communication node” for PR and relevant institutions, which intend to appoint their employees as national experts or, in case of state administration authorities, as structural trainees to EU institutions. MZV forwards the information about vacant positions for NE and structural trainees from PR to Central Government Authorities (hereinafter only “CGA”). The information regarding NE vacant positions is also published on MZV web site.

MZV intends to stimulate the activities of the relevant state administration offices to provide better training programmes for EU job applicants, both potential appointees and EU officials. In this respect, MZV tries to convince the state administration bodies that Slovakia is part of the EU and therefore it is essential, from the long-term perspective, to have the best Slovaks working in the EU institutions. In order to reach the abovementioned targets, MZV carried or is carrying out following activities:

- MZV organises quarterly co-ordination meetings with Heads of HR offices to discuss current tasks concerning Slovak HR policies related to EU institutions. These meetings, according to MZV, should also help to share good practices of relevant ministries.
- In October 2006 MZV organised a business trip for CGA Heads of HR offices to help them become familiar with the work of the European institutions and the issues of staffing. 28 Heads of HR Offices participated<sup>15</sup>.
- In autumn 2007, MZV prepares a similar trip for CGA Heads of Offices, the highest-ranking representatives of particular authorities. They should become acquainted with the functioning of EU institutions and recognise the importance of employing Slovaks in these institutions and to better understand HR policies on the EU level in order to improve national HR policies related to the EU agenda in their offices.

As it was mentioned, MZV also manages the Central Database of candidates for middle and senior management positions. In the previous chapter on PR, we already referred to the need for a systematic approach in the process of planning training programmes, being one of the potential reasons of the lower success rate in selection procedures.

Another area centrally managed by MZV is the monitoring of co-operation with other countries regarding mutual support in EU staffing. Based on the Decree No. 546/2005 from 13th July 2005, the MZV and the Slovak Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities should annually, until 30 June, prepare a report for the Government on current developments in EU staffing, with listed names and positions of candidates of other Member States supported by Slovakia as well as names and positions of Slovak candidates supported by other Member States. So far, there has been no such report handed over to the Government.

Such a report is important, as the support in the process of EU staffing is provided preferably by individual ministries, responsible for EU agendas in respected sectors. Information about mutual assistance is currently exchanged via letters and E-mails, subsequently appearing in background papers of senior Slovak representatives. In Brussels, the PR joins the process mostly through the employees appointed by the relevant Ministry involved in the support to the concrete position. The issue of mutual support should form part of the rotation and training strategy for the years 2008 – 2013. The strategy is prepared by MZV in collaboration with the Government Office and it should also cover the distribution of SR representatives in the EU institutions. The document should be finished in September 2007.

We think that in order to obtain a better overview it would be essential to collect information about mutual support of particular ministries in a central, systematically updated document, as defined in the Government Decree from July 2005. It would enable to manage mutual support from the relevant Member State for the purposes of all the ministries, as the information will be gathered and summarised in one place.

MZV also supports and initiates public events. In 2006 MZV, in co-operation with Academia Istropolitana Nova (hereinafter only “AIN”), PR in Brussels, SFIE, and the Permanent Representation of EC in Bratislava, carried out several training programmes and seminars designed for EU job applicants. The aim of the event was to better prepare Slovak citizens for EU tests and interviews. It was followed by a series of university lectures (primarily for 4th and 5th grades students) in the premises of Slovak universities and regional Employment offices in Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčín, Banská Bystrica, Nitra, Prešov and Košice. MZV actively

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<sup>15</sup> For more details see the “Report on Personal Representation of SR in the EU institutions” approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 421/2007 from 9 May 2007.

invites university students to become MZV interns in order to gather experience in collaboration with the EU institutions.

Training programmes carried out jointly by MZV and AIN are planned to reflect the calendar of open competitions. AIN, in collaboration with PR, monitors the list of planned competitions and in line with the list helps MZV to design the national training programme. MZV provides premises for these lectures.

Another area of MZV activities is information activities. MZV and the Slovak Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities elaborate annually the Report on Personal Representation of SR in the EU Institutions. MZV also produced the document “Rules and Procedures Applicable to Slovak National Experts and Trainees Secondment to the European Union”, following the Commission Decision<sup>16</sup>.

On the official web site ([www.mzv.sk/europska\\_integracia/europska\\_unia/personalne\\_zalezitosti](http://www.mzv.sk/europska_integracia/europska_unia/personalne_zalezitosti)) MZV informs about planned seminars and training programmes for EU job applicants, open competitions for EU officials and about the current NE positions. The web site also includes documents concerning subjects related to employment in the EU institutions (documents approved by the Government regarding the subjects related to employment in the EU institutions, reports on personal representation of SR in the EU institutions, Regulation laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of European Communities from 5 March 1968 amended by the Council Regulation No. 723 from 22 March 2004, valid from 1 May 2004), links to PR and EPSO web sites and the Handbook for EU job applicants (see below).

One of web site's shortcomings is the link to subjects related to employment in the EU institutions, which is relatively difficult to find for someone who doesn't know exactly where to look for it. It would be helpful to make the access easier.

Concerning the quality of training programmes planned to prepare applicants to EPSO open competitions, MZV published in September 2006 the revised version of the *Handbook for EU Job Applicants*, also available on MZV web site. The handbook includes information about particular EU institutions, employment policies, but mostly information about selection procedures. The chapter on competitions describes each stage of EU selection procedures and offers useful hints that might help the applicants to pass the selection. There are no recommendations for candidates applying for management positions in the handbook.

MZV is currently designing another handbook to reflect particular experience of the successful candidates with selection procedures and the work in EU institutions. This brochure should be produced by Euroiuris, the winner of a public procurement tender.

## **Activities of Relevant Departments**

The majority of the institutions have designed, in compliance with the national rules applicable to Slovak national expert secondment, their own guidelines for selection of NE candidates. Some of the institutions included them also into their overall HR strategies. The others associate the rules applicable to NE secondment only with HR development regarding NE secondments to EU institutions. Table No. 10 reviews the current situation concerning the internal guidelines in particular institutions. It only shows institutions, which have or are in the process of drafting the guidelines. Included are also organisations with at least formally approved internal selection and NE secondment rules, although they are not defined as internal guidelines, but appear as transparent rules.

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<sup>16</sup> Proposal of Procedures Applicable to National Experts secondment to EU Institutions approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 723/2004 and the Revised Rules and Procedures Applicable to National Experts and Trainees Secondment to the European Institutions approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 24/2007 from 10 January 2007.



**Table No. 10: NE Secondment in particular departments**

<b>Institutions with selection procedures and training programmes in place</b>	<b>Institutions with selection procedures in place</b>	<b>Institutions with formal selection procedures and approval processes with no internal guidelines</b>	<b>Institutions with selection procedures and training programmes <u>in progress</u></b>
MPSVR SR	MP SR	ÚV SR	MV SR
ÚNMS SR	MDPT SR	ÚPV SR	MF SR
	ŠÚ SR	NBS	MŽP SR
			ÚVO SR

*MPSVR SR – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, ÚNMS SR – Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing, MP SR – Ministry of Agriculture, MDPT SR – Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications, ŠÚ SR – Statistical Office, ÚV SR – Government Office, ÚPV SR – Industrial Property Office, NBS – National Bank of Slovakia, MV SR – Ministry of Interior, MF SR – Ministry of Finance, MŽP SR – Ministry of Environment, ÚVO SR – Public Procurement Office*

*Source: Document approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 421/2007 from 9 May 2007 analysed by the authors of the report*

The guidelines should help to increase transparency of selection procedures, which would lead to an increase in applicants, realising the chance for being successful. At the same time, transparent selection procedures allow to decide on the most appropriate NE or traineeship candidates. Both of the abovementioned mechanisms can only be used efficiently with excellent NE or traineeship candidates, as it was described in the NE and traineeship chapter.

Moreover, it is undeniably more efficient once the institutions have both the systems of selection procedures and of training programmes regarding their employees secondment to EU institutions. Training increases the likelihood of people being recruited by EU institutions. Regardless of the fact that they remain in Slovakia or they come back to their domestic institutions, training programmes produce more servants capable of handling the European agenda. As the table shows, there are only 2 authorities with such systems in place, four others are still in various stages of preparation of such system. We assume that having all the organisations with a joint system of selection procedures to be the optimum.

According to the Government Decree No. 723/2004, particular ministries manage their own reference lists of national experts, while MZV upholds the central database. As it was already mentioned, the ministries must also keep the lists of candidates for middle and senior management in the EU institutions. In addition, a number of ministries actively support education of their employees regarding EU institutions. Other authorities (including MF SR, MS SR, and Tax Directorate) have even paid for the AIN training of their employees, applying for EU jobs. It is an interesting fact that there are institutions supporting their employees, even if successful EU job applicants, leaving for Brussels, are usually treated with disrespect.

Ministries are also the “points of return”, where people, who worked at PR arrive. The former PR employees convey the knowledge of EU policies in their field of interest, contacts to people in the EU institutions and the general overview of their management. It is important for national institutions to fully benefit from the added value and provide appropriate positions where the former EU employees could utilise their experiences. It is not always the case in the reality.

## **Training Organisations**

Formal education system in Slovakia does not train the candidates for EU selection procedures, or for the work with EU institutions, both in theoretical EU knowledge and in necessary analytical, logical, verbal or presentation skills. The training programmes regarding selection procedures are mostly covered by different education agencies.

MZV SR regularly collaborates with Academia Istropolitana Nova (AIN), the first institution offering training classes on the subject of EU selection procedures. As it was mentioned before, AIN monitors EPSO selection

procedures on a regular basis and offers MZV the possibility to cooperate on training programmes for applicants. To date, AIN has trained about 150 people. The costs of training are covered by the applicants and are designed to simulate EPSO open competitions, including tests, essays and oral interviews. The courses also involve participation of candidates who passed successfully the selection procedures. Besides training programmes, AIN also provides individual consultation regarding the selection procedures. AIN does not monitor the success rate of their trainees in selection procedures. We think that in order to “fine-tune” the training programmes AIN should also introduce monitoring.

The Government Decree No. 704/2006 from 30h August 2006 imposes the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education to prepare the *National project for education of applicants, who wish to work in the European institutions, implemented through a contributory organization of Ministry of Education*. The training should be enclosed by a general project, aimed at professional training for those who wish to work in public sector and carried out by Academia Istropolitana. The part of the project concerning training related to EU jobs will be integrated into third level education of the general project and will be carried out in the form of coaching and training. This part on EU jobs should be executed some time in June 2008. There will be about 100 participants from Bratislava region and 100 from other regions of Slovakia. These 200 people will be selected out of 2000 in the two previous stages of the general project. The participants will come from various sectors, not only from the public administration, and will be mostly selected according to their potential for development. After the training, these 200 people should form the reserve for management positions in the EU institution. Based on the experience from the project, a strategy for permanent training related to the work in the EU will be designed.

None of the existing information mentions the actual content of training programmes for EU jobs applicants. It is reasonable to open the programmes for all the sectors of economy as this will increase the HR capacity for the work with EU institutions both in private and NGO sector, which still haven't been involved in training programmes with state participation. We think that education should reflect the areas that currently seem to be the most problematic for Slovaks in the selection procedures (preparation for pre-selection tests, essays, oral interviews, evaluation centres, etc.). For further details, see the chapter on education in ‘Recommendations’ at the end of this report.

## **Slovak Regions, Towns and Municipalities Activities**

Slovak regions, similar to other Member State regions, established the House of Slovak Regions. This project was launched in May 2005, but some of the regions already have their representatives in Brussels since the accession of SR to the EU (Prešov, Bratislava and Košice regions). All the regions jointly fund the House, including regions with no representation in Brussels (like Banská Bystrica and Trnava regions).

The activities of regions involve five basic areas:

- monitoring of events in the EU (each region monitors several areas and they share the information),
- policy monitoring in Slovakia,
- lobbying in EU institutions, mostly in relation to structural funds,
- networking with other EU regions, aimed at gathering experience to make the representation at EU level more advanced and efficient
- support for citizens from relevant regions arriving to Brussels (university students, entrepreneurs, EU job applicants from outside of Bratislava, presuming to receive more information and support from the representative of their region rather than from the central level, etc.).

The representatives of the House of Slovak Regions mostly communicate with DG REGIO and its Slovak employees. The initiative for contacts with the Slovaks from the DG comes from the representatives of the regions. The representatives of regions also define topics for the discussion, which reflect the demands from their regions. The establishment of the Regional operational programme in Slovakia is considered by regional representatives in Brussels as their personal achievement. In order to promote their interests they actively communicate with Slovak MEPs. The House of Slovak Regions also employs trainees, predominantly Slovaks. Most of them study abroad and internship form part of the requirements of their university, thus they usually work in the House as volunteers.

The House of Slovak Regions issues the monthly *In flow*, to facilitate information about EU events important for the regions. *In flow* is available on the web sites of all local authorities represented in Brussels, except for Nitra and Trnava regions, which are not present in Brussels at the moment. After a longer search, we could find *In flow* also on the web site of Banská Bystrica region, even though the region has currently no representation in Brussels. It is worth mentioning that we could not find the monthly on the official web site of the House of Slovak Regions ([www.skregions.eu](http://www.skregions.eu)<sup>17</sup>), which offers very little content besides the headlines. There is no link to *In flow* or the House of Slovak Regions on the PR web site either, only links to individual regions.

Apart from the House of Slovak Regions, there is also the representation of the Association of Slovak Towns and Municipalities in Brussels (hereinafter only “ZMOS”). In June 2007, ZMOS became a member of the House of the European Towns, Municipalities and Regions, which unites more than 20 local and regional authorities in Europe. The project of common representation of local authorities, networks and towns in Brussels is an initiative of national and multinational associations of local and regional self-governments in Europe. The aim of the project is to „unite the local and regional authorities associations with the intention to improve communication, share information, co-ordinate progress and defend common interests on the European level.“<sup>18</sup>

As opposed to regions uniting on the national level, the Slovak towns and municipalities decided to join towns and municipalities of other Member States. The opportunities and weaknesses of both types of associations can only be measured after several years of experience.

As the private sector and NGOs, even the regions, towns and municipalities do not benefit from appointing their employees as NE to EU institutions. It is to their detriment, as they are losing the opportunity to build up capacities in areas of their interests (e.g. the structural funds). They also lose the unique possibility to improve their network of contacts to EU institutions. It would also be reasonable to have fresh university graduates, working in local or regional self-governments, applying for internship programmes in the EU institutions.

## Private Sector Activities

Private sector represents a group of particular significance, which needs to be present in Brussels. There are currently about 15 000 – 20 000 lobbyists, 70 % come from the private sector<sup>19</sup>. The fairly high representation in Brussels is obvious, as about 70 % of national legislation is influenced by EU laws. However, the Slovak private sector seems to omit this fact. As opposed to other Member States, the representation of Slovak companies is not managed well. It is surprising that even state institutions established to enhance international business (attracting direct foreign investments, tourism), such as the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) and the Slovak Tourist Board (SACR), have no representation in Brussels.

One of possible reasons to explain the absence of Slovak companies on the EU level could be the lack of knowledge about EU processes and the influence of EU legislation on business environment, hence the companies do not realise the return on their investments. In such situation it is more difficult for private companies to send someone to work in Brussels, especially when there are not enough of excellent people.

There already have been attempts to establish a wider representation of Slovak business sector in Brussels, but they always failed because of problems with continuity of Slovak business representatives and with agreements between the relevant associations and companies. Therefore, the majority of Slovak companies are represented on the European level through European organisations in the relevant sector or through their multinational owners. Nevertheless, the Business Alliance of Slovakia (hereinafter only “BAS”) opened in January 2007 its office in Brussels with one employee. BAS has yet become the only Slovak business association with its representation in Brussels. BAS intends to utilise its representation office to monitor and influence the EU legislation in favour of its members. The representatives of BAS publish the monthly ‘EU

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<sup>17</sup> The page was analyzed on 25th June 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Opening the European House of Regions in Brussels: <http://www.zmos.sk/default.aspx?id=9&lang=sk>

<sup>19</sup> see: MZV SR, Lobbying in the European Union, January 2007, p. 21



OBSERVER', which provides information about current developments in the EU influencing the business environment (for more details see: [www.alianciapas.sk/menu\\_projekty\\_eurolegislativa\\_2007\\_euobserver.htm](http://www.alianciapas.sk/menu_projekty_eurolegislativa_2007_euobserver.htm)).

The private sector might increase its representation in EU institutions by using NE and traineeship programmes for their young employees. Both programmes also invite public sector participants. Slovak business sector, as opposed to universities and research institutions currently having almost the same number of appointed NE as the ministries, does not benefit from the opportunity to come closer to EU institutions at all. One of the possible reasons seems to be the lack of information about the programmes, how they work and what added value they might bring to a particular company and where could potential applicants find additional information about the existing NE vacant positions.

In order to make the voice of the Slovak private sector louder in Brussels, it would be beneficial for the private sector to improve the co-operation with MZV and PR, starting with linking the web sites of PR and BAS offices in Brussels

## **Key Issues Regarding Employment of Slovaks at EU Institutions**

The EU membership can mean different level of advantages for particular states. It mostly depends on how much a Member State benefits from its membership and makes its voice louder. After the first three years in the EU, Slovakia has learned a lot, but is still having difficulties in promoting Slovaks into EU institutions and in supporting cooperation with Slovaks who succeeded in finding a job in an EU institution. Various problems were outlined in previous chapters of the report. This chapter attempts to summarise the issues we have identified in our research, allowing us to draw recommendations to potential solutions in the final chapter.

The key areas can be divided into two basic groups: the general and the specific issues. The first group involves the absence of the strategy defining objectives that Slovakia would like to meet as the EU Member, the lack of well-educated professionals, information management, networking of Slovaks and the co-operation of Slovak stakeholders from different sectors at EU level. The latter group includes problems in staffing management positions and in the secondment of NE and trainees to EU institutions. After all, there is a clear link between the two groups.

### ***The “What’s Next After the EU Accession” Strategy***

The majority of our respondents referred to the absence of the long-term “What’s Next After the EU Accession” strategy as one of the key problems of Slovakia. Slovakia invested a considerable amount of energy into the EU accession in order to draw near other new Member States. The actual EU accession became the final goal rather than a valuable tool to meet the needs of Slovakia. The missing strategy is evident both in personal representation of Slovakia in the EU institutions and the specific policies. This leads to the fact that the Slovaks do not perceive themselves as members of the European Union, which makes the EU a subject of foreign policy. The departure of state servants to Brussels is thus, in the long-term perspective, considered to be a loss instead of a benefit to Slovakia.

Other stakeholders in the society share the similar view. For example, the Slovak private sector lacks a clearer vision and a comprehensive strategy of promoting its interests at EU level, which explains why the private sector has no representation on the European level. To complete the picture, Slovak media inform about EU actions always in their foreign section, as if it was a different state that Slovakia is not being part of. On the other hand, we must admit that this is the case of media all round the European Union. In addition, none of the Slovak newspapers have their own correspondents in Brussels, collaborating with journalists from other media (e.g. in case of SME and TREND) or simply using the news service of press agencies. The lack of printed media correspondents is apparently an issue of financial costs.

### ***Lack of Good Quality Candidates – Drawbacks of the Educational System***

The majority of the respondents in our survey agreed that Slovakia does not have enough prominent candidates to work in the EU or with the European agenda. That is the reason why most of the employers do not like to see their employees leave for Brussels, as these people are usually the best professionals, crucial for the organisation. The lack of quality candidates is related to the quality of our system of education. Our system does not prepare individuals to work in the European institutions or with the EU agenda.

Our survey identified the following skills and abilities to be missing or insufficient by Slovak graduates:

- the ability to analyse a topic and formulate ideas (essay writing)
- logical thinking in mathematical tasks, not just memorising the mathematical formula
- presentation and other communication skills (adequate self-promotion during job search)
- team spirit
- self-educating abilities.

It is obvious these are the generic skills required in all types of employment, not only in EU related jobs, it is therefore essential to provide appropriate training programmes in any case, not just in relation to our EU membership.

EU studies are not included in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. In case of higher education, the significance of European standards and policies is mostly ignored. As a consequence, the university students are unaware of this European dimension in their fields of study, which might set hurdles to their future work both in private or public sectors.

In case of lifelong learning, there is no strategy for lifelong learning, both for civil servants and the wider public, regarding the EU mechanisms. In the state and public administration we are currently witnessing a phenomenon, related to the general absence of lifelong EU learning, of shifting the European agenda to servants dealing with international affairs. This leaves out only a small group of people who travel to Brussels and work with the European agenda. Establishing an elite group of people might have negative consequences; once they leave the office it leads to a professional vacuum. As we have already mentioned with respect to universities, each professional area nowadays entails more or less a European aspect, which requires all public and state servants as well as employees of other sectors to have an overview of EU actions related to their field of work.

## **Information Management**

The third important issue is the information management. In our interviews we have encountered many cases with important and useful events carried out on one side, not reaching the target groups on the other.

An example of a not particularly efficient information management is a reasonably large group of officials working in the EU institutions, who are open to share information and experience, but there is no relevant interest on the Slovak side. Slovakia, on the other hand, seeks to communicate with Slovak officials in the EU. The exchange of information among state servants is important for Slovakia in order to influence new policy proposals, before they leave the European Commission, as it is more difficult to introduce changes once the proposals are already in the Council and the European Parliament. This does not undermine the fact that the Slovak Members of the Council and the MEPs also need up to date, well-founded opinions. It is unfortunate and not rare, regrettably, for Slovakia to express or change opinions even in the final stage of negotiations in the Council, where documents are to be formally approved.

Insufficient communication with the Slovaks can relate to the absence of quality personnel described above. There are simply not enough professionals in Slovak ministries able to adequately utilise information management and communicate with the colleagues in Brussels.

Another problem identified is the availability of information. A lot of information is spread via informal channels or documents ordinary person can access only after a cumbersome search. For example, information about *liaisons* at particular EU institutions and their mission is available only in documents approved by the Government. A regular person must know about the information and the place where to find it in order to retrieve it. This might be the reason why there was nobody among lower level officials we interviewed to know about this particular activity of PR and the possibility to contact *liaisons* and share information. Employees in lower level positions also did not know that PR seeks to contact Slovaks. These initiatives of PR are not mentioned on their web site, there is no opportunity for Slovaks in Brussels to join PR mailing list, as in the case of Hungarian or Czech PR web sites.

The interlinking of information between different sectors and organisations present at EU level is also missing and should, at least, be carried out in the form of linking the web sites (PR, House of Slovak Regions, BAS representatives, the Brussels office of Amrop Hever Slovakia in Brussels, Euractive, Catholic Mission in Brussels, etc.). Information network of Slovak stakeholders can also help to make the Slovak voice louder and to better promote the interests of particular stakeholders.

It is unfortunate that Slovakia has an inadequate information management and does not utilise the potential, as there are many activities carried out without the desired and needed effect.

## **Networking of the Slovaks**

To establish and fully utilise networks among the Slovaks is a specific problem we have encountered many times in interviews with our respondents. The majority of them described more, or less verifiable and resolvable reasons why our networking is less efficient than in other Member States, e.g. Hungary. The most frequent reasons were the following:

- it is typical for Slovaks abroad not to socialise with their countrymen,
- Slovaks are not proud enough to be Slovaks, national pride is not part of their culture and education
- there is mutual distrust among Slovaks, they do not want to share information, as the others might use them better than they could,
- the former state or public servants, arriving to Brussels, who had difficulties with their previous employer concerning their leave and are therefore reluctant to communicate with state administration representatives from Slovakia,
- some of the Slovaks who came to Brussels did not arrive from Slovakia and had no experience or contacts with Slovak administration, it is therefore difficult for them to establish contacts; others have the feeling that Slovakia did not help them and so there is no need to contact the state representatives,
- once the Slovaks create inter-personal networks, they cannot use them in their work.

We think that the last three reasons are tangible enough to be solved. First of all, it is to our detriment if a public institution with employees leaving to work in the EU institution poses problems to them because of their new job. By doing so, the department is wasting the potential to co-operate with these individuals once they start working in the EU institutions. It is inevitable to work with the public institutions and change their attitudes.

The problem of Slovaks, arriving to EU institutions from abroad and of the improved utilisation of existing networks is an evident overlapping of networking and information management issues. As we have already mentioned, ordinary people do not know anything about the intentions of PR to establish a network of Slovaks in the EU institutions, as this information cannot be retrieved easily. Also the names and contacts of *liaisons* are not freely accessible. The information about who represents Slovakia and in which position (i.e. the existing political nominations) can only be retrieved from governmental documents. There is no free access to information about the Slovaks in management positions in the EU institutions (with the exception of the grades AD 14). The Czech citizens, as opposed to the Slovaks, can find this information on the web site of the Czech PR. Better access to information would definitely help to resolve the last two defined problems of deficient networking of the Slovaks, as people would know whom to contact. Publishing this information might lead to the establishment of communication nodes every stakeholder would know about, which would increase the efficiency of their deployment. Better networks would enhance data collection about vacant positions in the institutions as well as enable to exchange information on particular policies between the Slovaks in Brussels and at home. Networks, of course, should not be limited only to Slovak and EU officials, but should also serve other stakeholders from different sectors (NGO, private sector, media, etc.).

## **Slovak Voice Diversity**

In both the business sector and the state administration, there is still no strategy of utilising the EU membership of SR. Apart from the sole initiative (BAS representation in Brussels) in January 2007 companies do not have their representations in Brussels, as opposed to their Czech counterparts. This clearly fades the voice of the private sector in policy-making processes that will influence the business environment in the Member States.

In the accessible documents we have not found a reference about the co-operation of MZV and PR with media, private sector and NGOs. We think this co-operation is insufficient, as it was already mentioned, both in the field of information management and networking and also in promoting the distribution of NE and the trainees from these sectors. In order to make the Slovak voice louder, we think the equal distribution of experience and knowledge gathered in the EU among different stakeholders rather than keeping them concentrated only in few places is inevitable.

## **Filling of the Management Positions**

As to filling the management positions, Slovakia is less successful than in staffing lower level positions. The worst situation is in middle management (see Table 8). In the interviews carried out during the project, three problems requiring immediate solution were defined:

- lack of quality candidates who are willing to participate in cumbersome selection procedures with a very uncertain final decision as opposed to the private sector where they are recruited to management positions much easier and faster,
- with regard to management positions, the state and political interference is necessary, but since there is not enough information about the actual applicants it makes it impossible to support them,
- there are no target-oriented training programmes for these positions, as opposed to lower level positions.

The first and the third problem applies both to middle (AD 9 – AD 13) and higher management grades (AD 14 and AD 15). It is even more challenging to find prominent candidates for senior management than for the middle management positions. Not using the target number of management positions during the transition period until 2010 may generate severe problems, as the middle management positions will be filled afterwards only from the inside of the EU institutions and that might also apply to some of the senior management positions. It is crucial for Slovakia to staff as many management positions as possible, so the managers can then assist applicants in finding vacant positions - temporary (trainees), permanent or a NE position. At the same time, managers possess lots of information they could share with their home country.

From the long-term perspective, we must not forget to fill lower level positions because, as it was already said, the management positions will often be staffed from the inside and it is therefore important to have as many Slovaks in the institutions as possible. To improve the staffing in lower positions, we must pay attention to areas defined in this project as challenging:

- essay writing
- numeric reasoning
- communication and presentation skills
- handling the oral interviews and
- active job search.

## **National Experts**

With respect to national experts, Slovakia is doing fairly well as to the number of the appointed persons. We presume, however, that there are several problem areas to be solved in order to utilise this tool more efficiently.

The first problem relates to the enhancement of rules for reinstating former NE. This improvement should protect both the employees and the employer. Notwithstanding the current legal regulations of the State Service Act, there is no guarantee that employees will be reinstated to the appropriate position, which reflect their experience. In some cases NE might have far too great expectations; in others they experience resentment at work, as they had the opportunity to be employed abroad and sometimes even because they are blamed for “blacksheeping”. In any case, ignoring the experience of NE would be a great loss for the appointing institution.

The existing legislation does not provide sufficient protection for employers as well. It might be costly for them to keep the position during the term of NE appointment and fill it only temporarily. Employers are also obliged to pay salary and contributions on behalf of NE, even if they do not work for them at that time. Moreover, NE are not required to return to previous positions, which significantly decreases the effectiveness of such appointments for the employer.

The next problem area is the need for an increased diversification in utilising NE mechanisms. It happens nowadays that some of the organisations appoint three or five NE, sometimes several NE are appointed to one EU institution to the position of one kind. The list of appointing institutions does not contain any

representatives of private sector, NGOs, towns and regions or other institutions also eligible to NE secondments. The positive influence of NE mechanisms is therefore being accumulated only in several institutions.

The third area of problems is the ineffective utilisation of funds allocated from the General Treasury Administration for financing the transition period at the beginning of NE appointment. These funds have never been fully disbursed. Paradoxically, the number of structural traineeships decreases, as there are not enough financial means to cover their costs. It would be for the benefit to review the utilisation of the General Treasury Administration funds for financing structural traineeships.

## ***Trainees***

Slovakia participates in all types of traineeships carried out in the EU – structural, Blue Book and other. In case of structural traineeships the problem is in the decreasing interest, due to financial reasons. As it was mentioned before, it is essential to review the utilisation of financial means from the General Treasury Administration for their financing.

At the same time it is necessary, as in the case of NE secondments, to adjust the rules for reinstatement of interns both on the employers and on the employees side. The interns, after their return, should have the opportunity to make the most of their newly gathered knowledge and the employers should be entitled to commit the interns financially or contractually, to receive at least a partial return on the investments. Employees ought to maintain contacts with former interns even after they leave to work for EU institutions in order to utilise previous investments.

In the case of Blue Book and other traineeship programmes, the problem lies in the lower number of candidates compared to the potential number of applicants (see e.g. the difference in the number of applicants to the number of university graduates or the number of interns in individual cabinets). The potential to increase the number of interns could be found in schools and various public, private and non-governmental institutions.



## Recommendations

In the previous part we have introduced the key issues concerning the Slovak voice in Brussels, which we identified in the course of our interviews and analyses. We believe that solving these issues is inevitable. Therefore, we present recommendations that should lead to changes in the area of defining strategies of HR development, networking, information management and staffing. Most of the recommendations address the state administration authorities. Considering the indefinite division of competence regarding EU matters among the two key players - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of SR and the Government Office of SR - there are many activities referring to both institutions. Clear definition and proper division of competence form the first fundamental recommendation and at the same time the prerequisite for a successful implementation of those to follow.

As it was already mentioned, Slovakia seems to be “losing breath” after the EU accession, taking pleasure in the relief following the entry, without creating long-term strategies of promoting its interests in Brussels. The question of „What’s next after the EU accession?“ must be considered in two basic platforms. The first one is political, where Slovakia has the opportunity to influence EU policy-making processes and it’s on us to decide how we are going to utilise this opportunity. The second is the platform of HR development, on all levels and in all areas, which will subsequently have a positive influence also on the political level, as well-designed and target-oriented policies require excellent people and information.

### **Political Level**

The process of making the Slovak voice in Brussels louder is connected to the ability of the country to use all the accessible means to promote its interests. Taking the real size and the power of the country into consideration, Slovakia has two possibilities how to pursue its priorities in the EU. The first is systematic and strategic influence of policy-making. The second is forming coalitions and supporting compromise proposals of larger countries. The area Slovakia is not paying sufficient attention to is shaping EU policy-making processes.

Regarding the sole competence of the EC to submit European legislation, the Commission is in the spotlight of the lobbying groups. The drafts of directives and regulations are being prepared by the EC and pass through all of the institutional levels. Identification of people who design strategic documents, directives and regulations and the subsequent intervention in the process is a common practice. According to many indicators, it is obvious that in Slovakia the significance of such interventions is being underestimated. One example of well-functioning lobbying is when a member state, in order to support its amendments to legislation, establishes contact to the EC legislators, using its representatives in Brussels, to introduce own solutions and proposals for changes.

Such situation can be illustrated on the example of the ‘Services Directive’, where the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereinafter only “MPSVR”) via its representative in Brussels, would contact the Slovaks working at DG Employment in order to find out who is responsible for the draft of the directive. The representative of SR would then communicate with relevant people to propose potential amendments to the directive, or he would use other contacts in order to enforce our position. To the best of our knowledge, Slovakia rarely uses such mechanism. Common approach of Slovak institutions is to only enter the actual approval process in the Council. At this stage, it is difficult to introduce any significant changes and if, then only at the cost of forming large coalitions. In order to eliminate this phenomenon we offer several recommendations; most of them later described in details as part of recommendations in other areas.

The first recommendation is

- **to design a training programme regarding EU lobbying.**

The programme will focus on public and state administration, local authorities and NGOs. With regard to the fact that MZV SR ‘shelters’ similar programmes, we suggest this department to be the programme co-ordinator. One of the possibilities to finance the training is the national project funded by the European Social Fund (hereinafter only “ESF”). We propose that MZV SR should negotiate with the Ministry of Education (hereinafter only “MŠ SR”) about the possible support in the framework of the national project carried out by Academia Istropolitana.

The second recommendation is

- **to establish efficient information flow between SR and the EU allowing to contact Slovaks working in the EU institutions (see details in the Information Management chapter below)**

The third recommendation is

- **to have state administration authorities utilise lobbying groups present in Brussels**

This tool is to be used mainly to promote significant agenda, which requires intensive participation of human resources.

With reference to the attempt to 'trim down' the state administration it is obvious that many of the analytical and strategic work will have to be outsourced. Only the first-class and professional background papers and proposals have a real chance to be enforced in the EU policy-making and approval processes. Therefore, our next recommendation is

- **to draft materials regarding the co-operation of state administration authorities and the private sector (mostly think-tanks and professional lobbying groups) in order to gather political support for this type of co-operation.**

The Government Office should manage the drafting of such materials.

An important political tool at EU level concerns the topics that the country communicates in the EU framework.<sup>20</sup> After the accession, SR was perceived as the country with clear topics related to the reforms introduced in Slovakia. After the parliamentary elections in 2006 and the change of Government, SR lost its clear topic that might have been perceived as typically Slovak. This fact has a negative influence on the intensity of Slovak voice in Brussels. Specifically the consistency of approaches and opinions was identified as the key issue in promoting interests of smaller countries. With the absence of topics and low consistency of attitudes is closely connected to the lack of information about the attitudes of other Member States towards fundamental issues, negotiated at the Council or EP level. This fact hinders the long-term process of defining positions, building coalitions or training employees in priority areas. Notwithstanding the attempt of SR to promote its position successfully in all areas, it is important to define priorities of SR in the medium term. Therefore, we suggest the Government Office, in collaboration with all the ministries

- **to develop a strategic document with SR priorities in relation to EU policies<sup>21</sup>.**

Many issues important for SR have yet had no representation in other Member States. That is, for example, the case of free movement of labour or the directive on services. These topics are perceived in Brussels as not enough enforced by the new Member States and so Slovakia could become the leader in this field and increase the intensity of its voice with regard to other topics as well.

Bound up with the abovementioned recommendation, is the earlier proposed establishment of prominent and functioning co-operation between the Government and professional circles. Defining priorities in the next step requires grounding for their presentation based on professional analyses and reports.

A useful way of enforcing the Slovak interests in the EU is building coalitions and promoting co-operation with other countries. MZV, from the central level, 'shelters' the monitoring of collaboration in providing mutual support of staffing in the EU institutions. The information about joint support is currently shared in forms of letters and E-mails and published in background papers for negotiations of senior representatives of Slovakia. The PR joins the process in Brussels. We think that in order to improve information management it would be essential,

- **to publish the information about joint support of particular countries in a central, regularly updated document, as it was declared in the Government decree from July 2005.**

This will enable to improve joint support from a particular state for the needs of other ministries.

In the area of human resources there are opportunities for joint support among the Member States. For example, such support can be carried out during the recruitment of Commissioner's cabinet members, which

<sup>20</sup> The Czech Republic is being connected to human rights, Poland to agriculture, Hungary to the minorities.

<sup>21</sup> The document could serve as the national Lisbon strategy, although aimed at the EU.



involves restrictions regarding the nationality of cabinet members. In case of Slovakia we suggest, as there are no language barriers, to close an agreement with the Czech Republic on mutual exchange of servants whenever the regulations do not allow Slovak/Czech officials in management positions to employ Slovak/Czech nationals.

Last, but not least, we consider as important the actual management of the whole process of strengthening the Slovak influence in Brussels. It seems to be, in many cases, unclear as the influence is separated between MZV SR and the Government Office. The indistinct division of competence between these state administration authorities represents an unnecessary brake. Our further recommendation is therefore to

- **define the competence of the ministries and the Government Office to ensure promotion of Slovak interests in the EU institutions.<sup>22</sup> In connection with this step financial means and human resources for particular departments will be allocated.**

## ***Developing Human Resources and Raising EU Awareness***

Slovakia struggles with lack of well-educated professionals who could help in promoting the country interests in Brussels. This shortage is connected with the absence of a central strategy for building the capacities and addressing potential candidates to work in the EU institutions as well as the absence of support in selection procedures and in the process of finding vacant positions in the institutions. On the professional level, this fact is reflected in the low number of Slovaks working in the institutions. On the non-professional level, the most significant factor is the lack of information and very little awareness about EU mechanisms and their influence on everyday course of events.

## **Recruitment at EU Institutions**

It is time for Slovakia to start planning how to raise the level of its competitiveness from 10 new members to all the others after 2012 and to define strategic steps to become more successful in the process of increasing the representation of Slovaks in the EU institutions.

In order to manage the EU recruitment successfully, it is indispensable to pass the EPSO tests, the crucial part of selection procedures. This requires a range of skills and knowledge. Improving the quality of state support in training programmes regarding the EPSO test and the subsequent co-operation in the process of finding vacant positions for successful candidates are one of the key recommendations in staffing well-educated professionals in EU institutions. At the same time, it proves to be a good prerequisite for motivating these people to co-operate with PR in the future. During our interviews we experienced unwillingness of some of the Slovaks to do something for their home country. This phenomenon is based on three factors. The first is the unpleasant experience when leaving the home office, as the person is confronted with envy and various administrative obstacles. The second factor is that not all of the new EC officials from Slovakia had worked in the state administration and they do not understand why and how they should co-operate e.g. with the ministries. The final factor is that the reference quotas for Slovakia are filled with people of Slovak nationality living abroad (e.g. emigrants and their children). Their motivation to co-operate and bond to SR is, in many cases, minimal.

Therefore, our recommendation is

- **to actively address people interested in work in Brussels (students, training programme applicants), providing excellent training and support for the successful candidates in contacting PR and finding vacant positions.**

The recommendation relates to MZV SR, which does not have such activity in its competence portfolio. A good tool within the framework of supporting potential applicants for EU positions is to organise information seminars at universities, where students can be offered to receive via E-mails information about the course of events in Brussels, about new positions, training programmes for EPSO tests, etc.

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<sup>22</sup> Defining competence can be connected with the issue of amending the Competence Act.

## System of Education

Regardless of the fact that the favourable conditions for Slovak citizens regarding EU recruitment will only last until 2010, it is necessary to continue the training programmes and at the same time to keep increasing the Slovak influence in EU decision-making processes.

In many interviews about the admission tests and the process of finding work in the EU institutions, we identified the discord in skills that people learn in the formal education system and the skills required at admission tests.

The skills necessary to pass the selection procedure (logical thinking, presentation skills etc.) are nowadays required generally, not only in the EU institutions. Once the reforms of primary and secondary school systems will reflect the enhancement of skills related to information processing, analytical and logical thinking, the ability to formulate arguments, knowledge of at least two EU languages, the support for students own initiative as well as team work, then the improved system of education will increase the ability of Slovaks to work in the EU institutions.

At the same time we suggest that

- **relevant subjects at all school levels of formal system of education contain tuition of EU issues increasing the level of understanding EU mechanisms in the society.**

The fact that in the initial years our representation in the European institutions involved mostly people who worked or studied abroad is an argument to support students' mobility in universities and high schools. Supporting the mobility and international projects results in the increased number of well-educated people to work in the EU institutions and also contributes to the expansion of domestic capacities. The academic world and state and public administration sectors will benefit the most.

Therefore it is essential for

- **SR to develop, using MŠ SR, the strategy of support for students at College of Europe, European University Institute or any other institutions providing first-class education in this area.**

The strategy should include the establishment of the system of scholarships or reduced-interest loans. The system would also commit students to work for a certain period of time (e.g. 2 years) in the ministries, local authorities or educational institutions. Students who received this type of education would be, immediately after their return, invited to join the training course for EU admission tests.

We are now witnessing the integration in all the areas, which creates the demand for knowledge about EU mechanisms and the policy-making and approval procedures. The long-term challenge for the universities is to include tuition of EU subjects in the curricula and training programmes. The primary objective should be to make the students acquainted with EU regulations in given areas and teach them where to retrieve the necessary information regarding their field of work (e.g. web sites).

We suggest that

- **MŠ SR in collaboration with MPSVR SR to introduce new evaluation criteria applicable to the evaluation of ESF projects aimed at changes in the curricula and innovative study programmes, involving evaluation of their contribution to increase in information regarding EU policies.**

Considering the increasing number of Slovaks working in the EU institutions, it will be of great benefit to use their experience in particular in training programmes. People with real-life experience will increase the quality, explain in detail the issues of particular areas and make the work in Brussels and in the EU more attractive.

The specific HR issue in Brussels is the lack of top-quality interpreters and translators. Universities should adapt to the ever-increasing demand for interpreters, as it is a very attractive job with a high probability of finding a vacant position in the institutions.

We suggest that

- **MŠ SR in collaboration with MZV SR and higher education institutions to develop the action plan of filling vacant positions for interpreters in the EU institutions.**

The action plan should focus on two areas. The first is designing measures to solve the existing lack of interpreters, e.g. to increase the number of training courses for potential applicants and to provide support

during the training for admission tests. The second area involves the introduction of top-quality Bachelor and Master programmes aimed at work in the EU institutions. In case of Master study programmes we suggest to extend the utilisation of scholarships as well as loan systems (see the second recommendation in this chapter) for interpreters, supporting their mobility.

## State and Public Administration

The knowledge of the EU agenda is often associated with international affairs and the European integration departments in spite of the fact that our membership in the EU influences work of all departments of respective organization.

The problem of assigning the European agenda to a small group of people is an issue that must be solved in the future in order to avoid professional vacuum once these people decide to leave. It is necessary to support two types of education.

The first is the education of senior management of state and public administration to explain the meaning and functioning of the EU, the necessity of appointing servants to Brussels in order to change the common attitude that business trips to Brussels are a reward. The aim is to have in each of the Ministries one employee, who has sufficient knowledge of EU mechanisms.

We suggest that

- **MŠ SR in collaboration with MPSVR SR to submit to the Government of SR a document, which analyses the possibilities of financing the education from the means of ESF. In case of such possibility, MŠ SR in co-operation with MPSVR SR and MZV SR will elaborate a national project of education to explain the significance of active HR policy related to the EU at relevant departments. At the same time, MZV SR in co-operation with MŠ SR will examine the possibility of financing this kind of activity via the national project, carried out by Academia Istropolitana**

The second type is the system of lifelong education in EU matters for employees of state and public administration and of local authorities. This system can have, as the professional one, the biggest contribution from courses and programs aimed at utilising the European tools.

We propose to include this type of education in the abovementioned analysis of the potential ESF funding. In this case

- **MŠ SR in collaboration with MPSVR SR, MZV SR, VÚC and ZMOS develops a national project including the establishment of the system of lifelong education for the employees of state and public administration and of local authorities with the financing of the target group training.**<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, it is necessary to consider the possibility of including these activities in the national project within the ESF framework currently implemented by Academia Istropolitana.

In case it is impossible to finance these activities through ESF, we propose to the Government to allocate the means for the first type of education and MZV to provide its completion. At the same time we propose to the Government to approve a decree ordering MZV SR in co-operation with MŠ SR and MPSVR SR to design ways of financing the second type of education.

## Private Sector

As we have already mentioned in the first part of this document, Slovakia is lagging behind significantly in the number of private sector representatives in Brussels. Insufficient information about future prospects, underestimating of the significance, reluctance to invest and inadequate human resources belong to the main reasons of this phenomenon. Participation of the private sector in Brussels is mainly in its competence.

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<sup>23</sup> In case of suggested introduction of education about the EU at all the stages and types of formal education it would be at this group only the renewal of the knowledge brought from school.

SR should not substitute the private sector when enforcing its interests, but can help at entering the new environment. One of the possibilities is

- **to seat private sector representatives in the proposed Slovak House,**

which would lower the operational costs and at the same time increase the added value of this project, as SR would have the regional, business, cultural representatives and other potential stakeholders under one roof.

Another possibility we identified, also included in the chapter on national experts, is

- **to encourage full private sector involvement in information campaigns**

with the aim to increase information about the possibilities of appointing their representatives to EU institutions. During the process of analysing documents, web sites and interviews, we have not encountered any activities that the PR or MZV would carry out in collaboration with the private sector or NGOs. To the best of our knowledge there is no systematic co-operation both in training programmes for EU job applicants (traineeships, national experts) from this sector and in promoting their interests. Appointing national experts and trainees from private sector would support human resources with the option to utilise their knowledge to their benefit.

## **EU Awareness**

The 'switch' from the perception of the EU as an external entity to the perception of Slovakia as its part is another important task in making the Slovak voice in Brussels louder. It is vital to increase the overall awareness of professional and non-professional public to perceive the EU as a space, where the fundamental strategic grounds of SR focus in the following decades are being formulated.

Most of our recommendations in other areas will positively influence the EU awareness. The majority of the population outlines its ideas about the EU based on the information in media. The fact that information about the EU appears in the foreign news section is the example of wrong perception from the journalists' side. We suggest

- **MZV SR would prepare a series of seminars for media representatives in order to explain the link between the Slovak and the EU policies**

We recommend that the seminar should be led by experienced professionals, e.g. Slovak journalists in Brussels, also hosting foreign journalists to present their experience with information on EU matters. Part of the seminar would explain the advantages of having own correspondent to cover EU subjects, as the Slovak print media are the only one without a correspondent in Brussels. The Czech journalists might serve as appropriate intermediaries.

In the professional area it is necessary to increase the level of information about the influence of the decision-making in Brussels on all sectors of economy. We therefore suggest that

- **MPSVR SR elaborates the national project of education of the professional associations funded by ESF and adjusted to the needs of individual sectors.**

Part of the project would include information about possibilities of appointing representatives of associations to Brussels, lectures on the benefits and ways of lobbying or establishing networks on the European level.

## **Information Management**

As there is not enough information for Slovaks about the Slovak positions in Brussels, as confirmed in most of the interviews, the main systemic recommendation is

- **approving new information strategy between Bratislava (state and public administration, private sector, non-governmental organisations, media etc.) and Brussels (PR, EP, the Council, EC).**

As we mentioned before, without proper information management Slovakia might suffer severe losses. Establishing a functional system requires the combination of three basic factors: ability of ministries to generate

positions and to send information to relevant people; existence of efficient information tools, the determination of people in Brussels to accept and present the positions of SR. Based on our interviews we have identified the first two factors as being the most challenging.

The ability of state administration authorities to generate positions and information is closely linked to the beforementioned HR development at these offices as well as with their ability to gather expertise from external environment. If ministries retain a position, concept or other strategic document or information, it is necessary to forward it to all relevant people in Brussels.

Insufficient information flow causes the inability of representatives to react flexibly to altering situations during negotiations in the EP or the Council. Gaps in information about the positions of SR to essential topics provided to MEPs acting on behalf of their Slovak voters might again lead to losses. The same applies to meetings of the Council, where in many cases the Slovak representative sits during the whole meeting without active participation.

Positions of SR to all the topics negotiated in the EP and in the Council must be easily accessible for all the Slovaks in Brussels. We propose

- **to develop information strategy that will guarantee in-time information for people who need them in negotiations and in building potential coalitions for the purpose of their enforcement.**

In regard to Slovaks working in the EU institutions we propose to create the opportunity to join the mailing lists and subsequently forward the particular type of requested information. For example, a servant working at DG Employment will continually receive information about a particular position of SR in the area of employment. The aim is to have relevant people delivered professional information they cannot read in the newspapers.

The basic tool of improving the quality of communication must therefore be related to the Internet. Our next recommendation is

- **to improve the PR web site.**

Despite the fact that the PR web site<sup>24</sup> is fairly comprehensible, it is not a prominent source of information. In comparison to the web site of the Permanent Representative of Czech Republic<sup>25</sup>, which might serve as a model, the Slovak web site has several shortcomings. Simply by comparing both web sites, we can easily formulate recommendations for improvements and changes.

The first setback is the link from MZV to PR web site. On the Czech site you need two clicks (the first on the eye-catching banner 'CR and the EU'), on the Slovak site you are required to search for the link in the text.

It is evident from the very first sight that the Czech PR web site offers more content and easier page orientation. Opening the first internal link *News* confirms our previous statement, as there are many articles divided according to the topics (e.g. Schengen, Roaming, Lisbon Agenda, Agriculture, The European Constitution and others). The Slovak site only briefly mentions two cultural events.

Information about the PR office are also diverse, both in extent and content, the Slovak site offers only basic information about PR head office and contacts to particular PR employees. The Czech web site in the *Permanent Representation* section offers basic information about the PR office, information on office structure and units including contacts to individual employees, information about the European Council in Brussels with links to related articles and interviews in Czech, position of Czech Republic to the EU Constitutional Treaty, etc. The site also includes the joint calendar of Czech activities during the Portuguese presidency, clearly describing all the formal (Council meetings, business trips of ministers, etc.) and informal events (films, concerts, exhibitions).

The most impressive difference, another proof of our previous statement, is the internal link dealing with Czechs and Slovaks in Brussels. The information on the Slovak web site is limited to basic contacts to Slovak MEPs, regions, journalists, the Commissioner and diplomatic missions. The Czech page offers the choice of

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.mfa.sk/zu/index/podstranka.php?id=367>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/default.asp?NoObl=1&ParentIDO=14651&ido=14651&amb=3&idj=1>



18 groups of people, e.g. lobbyists, interpreters, agencies, regions, restaurants, musicians, scouts and others, where you can find all sorts of information. It also includes the complete list of EU officials working in different EU institutions, (including management positions and national experts) with contacts and pictures. The variety of information is very important for people, who are willing or need to get in touch with the representatives. For example, if applicants on the EPSO reserve list are in search for work and know about vacant positions in an EU institution, they can easily make contact with relevant EU officials in management positions and use the opportunity to meet them and ask for advice regarding admission interview.

The web site also includes many minor links to useful documents concerning life in Brussels, as e.g. the handbook '*How to survive in Brussels*', but also contacts to Czech doctors, lawyers and other professionals in Brussels.

Internal link to *job opportunities at EU institutions* on the Czech web site includes all the information concerning vacant positions, application process, contacts to relevant institutions and others. Very interesting is the link to *salaries in the EU institutions*. The Slovak site does offer information on possible employment, but the page orientation is cumbersome, often redirecting you to English web sites, which in case of Czech site happens very rarely.

Great difference was noticed also in the internal link to *Documents*. The Slovak page includes two documents and the PR regulations. On the Czech site you will find the EU language dictionary, the National Program of Reforms Concerning the Lisbon Strategy as well as links to other important documents, including strategic documents and the calendar of events.

Significant difference is in the possibility to join the mailing list to receive weekly updated information on upcoming cultural and other events. This service is not available on Slovak PR web site.

Really essential helpers are the banners on the right side of the Czech page.

Based on our comparison, we have two recommendations addressed to MZV SR concerning the Slovak PR web site.

The first is

- **to improve the links to other Slovak web sites<sup>26</sup> on the PR home page,**

which would allow easier access to fundamental information. It would be useful to also include links to the web site of regions, of the Slovak Business Alliance office in Brussels and of other newly established representations (House of Slovak Regions, ZMOS as the member of the House of the European towns, villages and regions in Brussels, Catholic Mission, Amrop Hever in Brussels and others).

A top-quality web design requires complex changes. Therefore, we propose to draw on the site map of the Czech PR web site of SZ.

The improved web site should involve:

- Updated information on all events related to SR and the EU<sup>27</sup>
- Updated information on all events carried out by Slovaks in Brussels
- The list with contacts to all the Slovaks working in EU management positions
- The list with contacts to all the Slovak national experts and trainees
- Updated information on all vacant positions in the EU institutions
- The list of all PR liaisons
- Information on networking the PR wants to stimulate
- The possibility to join the mailing list to receive fundamental information on the events in Brussels, SR position, strategies and concept in particular areas according to recipients' choice
- Access to all strategic documents of SR
- Useful information for Slovak newcomers

In order to meet this objective it is necessary that MZV, in compliance with the contracts, orders the webmaster to create the missing links and improve the quality of web site. In case of a new contract, we propose to consider the option of creating a brand new web site.



The implemented tools, such as the new web site, mailing list or newsletters for those who seek information, must above all be comprehensible and updated, as the number of topics is large and progresses fast. The proposed information activities must be managed by the PR. The PR employees, appointed by relevant ministries, would then be responsible for the updates to the content as well as the delivery of positions to documents using the contacts on the mailing list. They to communicate daily with their ministries and therefore we do not consider forwarding documents to the central E-mail directory of PR as an activity to take much of their capacity.

With regards to the fact that our respondents identified the interest in communication from the side of national authorities and institutions as very insufficient, we propose

- **in case of foreign business trips of individual ministry representatives to meet with people working with the same issues in the EC or other EU institutions.**

It would be of great benefit, if, for example, the state secretary of Ministry of Agriculture during his business trip to Brussels would meet with the employees of DG Agriculture.

The least challenging factor is the motivation of people working in the EU institutions to receive information and positions of Slovakia. As we have already mentioned, many of our respondents were disappointed from the lack of interest in their information and influence they are willing to use in favour of Slovakia. This determination must be supported by activities that will keep their willingness to co-operate in the future as well. It is mainly important not to complicate their departure to Brussels, as at their home offices they are often confronted with envy and prejudice. Such experience might in the future lead to natural repugnance to help. Our recommendation is, as in the chapter on selection procedures, to create better conditions for applicants to pass admission tests. Significant part of building a positive relation is the work with people arriving to Brussels, which we describe in the next chapter.

## **Networking of the Slovaks**

Networking of the Slovaks is closely connected to two standpoints we discovered in our interview. The first point of view is the lack of interest of the Slovaks to meet and create informal networks, in comparison to the Hungarians and the Czechs. On the other hand, there is sufficient determination, but not enough possibilities. While the first issue is difficult to tackle, as someone not interested in meeting and co-operating is hard to convince, in the second case we see significant deficiencies.

In order to establish a good network we must differentiate between formal and informal networks. Concerning informal networks, insufficient information about existing events and the lack of appropriate premises to absorb increased interest are regular shortcomings. This leads to informal meetings at the Czech PR, e.g. film screenings, etc. Therefore, it is important to carry out similar activities with the highest possible amount of invitations from the PR side. At the same time, in case the Slovaks outside PR intend to organise various activities, we propose to enable them to use the premises of PR or the House of Slovak Regions and thus to support their activity and the positive approach to co-operation with PR. In order to support those interested in meeting with the Slovaks, it is important to create a mailing list on the PR web site, which will be the essential source of information on upcoming events and the means of mutual collaboration.

An important prerequisite to future co-operation and the integral part of the strategy of individual approach to all the successful candidates, is the help after the arrival to Brussels. We therefore suggest to PR, using the example of Czech PR to

- **offer Slovak newcomers a handbook on ‘How to survive in Brussels’ with all the information useful in everyday life.**

The brochure would be sent to all future EU servants before their departure from Slovakia, together with the invitation to a personal meeting with PR representatives of the relevant field of competence. The meeting

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<sup>26</sup> banner on [www.mzv.sk](http://www.mzv.sk), links to articles in Slovak media related to the EU or professional publications with regard to current EU topics (Schengen, Constitutional Treaty, etc..)

<sup>27</sup> It is useful to link the web site with the regional magazine “In flow” and to the web site of Slovaks living in Belgium <http://www.exil.sk/site/belgicko.php?cat=121>

would serve to establish the first contact with a new employee and create the base for further co-operation. An alternative is to use the Czech on-line version of the brochure by linking the Slovak PR web site to the Czech PR home page.

In building the formal networks, the activity of PR plays a key role. As in the case of other countries, SZ is a communication node with information flows among the officials in Brussels and between Brussels and Slovakia. This fact is the starting point for building an efficient information system. The most appropriate way of communication on a daily basis is to use E-mails. Therefore,

- **the indispensable prerequisite to stimulation of information flows is to have updated list of E-mail addresses of people willing to co-operate.**

We recommend that PR devotes time to their creation and updating and designs a mechanism to include newcomers. People should have the option to change their user data and basic information. Establishing a network would be beneficial to both sides. From the side of the EU servants, the network will serve to gather updated information about the developments in Slovakia concerning their field of work, about the ongoing events and at the same the vacant positions in EU institutions. PR will inform people about areas in which SR seeks to appoint national experts (in compliance with the recommendations concerning national experts). Simultaneously, the servants can inform PR about vacant positions in their departments and Directorates-General (DG). This internal information will help PR to distribute the applicants from EPSO reserve lists as well as national experts or trainees. The database can also be used to address particular people to meet with the employees of ministries and discuss the Slovak positions. Using the administration servants, who know about the prepared documents, is namely a significant tool how to intervene in policy-making processes ahead of time. On the other hand, the ministries should send flash reports with information about the latest developments in individual sectors to the Slovak citizens working in the relevant DG.

An important part of networking of information is the co-operation between PR and Commissioner Figel's Cabinet. The information can help PR to have an overview of vacant positions. Together with other Slovaks working in management positions of different DGs, the Cabinet is able to distribute Slovak trainees and national experts and therefore increase their number. A good example of efficient Commissioner's work in this field is Hungary with an outstanding number of senior managers, due to pro-active work of the Hungarian Commissioner, Mr. László Kovács.

We consider the public sector (regions, towns, and municipalities), private sector and NGOs as the integral part of the voice of Slovakia in Brussels, it is therefore important for PR to support the networking on formal or informal levels, including also representatives of these sectors. A useful approach is to actively collaborate with these stakeholders in organising activities or to include their information in the information package provided to network members via E-mails.

## ***National Experts***

National experts form a group, which conveys contacts to EU servants and expertise in EU policies to Slovakia, and in which the majority of future EU employees are being accumulated. The need for a strategic approach to this group, also described in MZV documents, is inevitable. The main recommendations in the area of national experts are:

- **to approve new annual action plans regarding NE appointments**
- **to improve mechanism of NE appointments and the provided support to appointed NE**
- **to examine and evaluate the priorities of SR applicable to NE and trainees secondment to EU institutions**
- **to create clear rules of state employees retainment**
- **to develop and launch information campaigns aimed at local authorities, private and non-profit sector**
- **to reform the NE transitional fund**

## Action Plans

The first mechanism is

**to approve annual action plans regarding NE secondment.**

Based on the information about the future legislation and issues, which the ministries consider important, Slovakia is able to identify the potential areas of NE appointments. Action plans will directly identify the number of national experts and the area of their secondment. MZV would be responsible for the development of such action plans, in co-operation with all other ministries. One of our recommendations is to form an external working group, consisting of representatives of private and non-profit sectors, with the aim to identify the areas of potential NE secondments and define the number of appointments. We think there should be a bigger diversity in NE secondments, both in the number of appointing institutions and the number of recruiting institutions. Regarding the design of action plans, we propose to

**introduce a regulation, which would impose that instead of appointing less NE from one organisation to one institution one should prefer appointments of NE from various organisations and sectors.**

EU experience and expertise should be distributed more equally to different types of organisations rather than being concentrated only in few places.

## National Expert Appointments and the Supporting Mechanisms

The existing mechanisms need to be upgraded and

**should define procedures applicable to NE secondments from all the sectors, including private and non-governmental, and manage their training and education.**

It should resolve the issue of funding, which should include national experts appointed from the non-profit sector. The system of education and training of applicants should also become an integral part of the mechanism. At the same time, it should include guarantees regarding the return on investments into NE secondments from the public sector. The main tool in their retainment should be positive motivation rather than repressive measures. The mechanism should commit ministries to offer former NE an adequate position in the field of their expertise and an appropriate salary reflecting their experience.

## Examination and Evaluation of Slovak Priorities for Appointment of National Experts and Trainees to EU Institutions

Due to the fact that these priorities have been implemented only recently (in January 2007), it is not possible to examine the cases of currently appointed NE for their compliance with these priorities. Therefore, we recommend for MZV SR, in collaboration with other ministries, to carry out a survey by January 2008 to monitor and evaluate the impact of priorities applicable to NE secondments and submit the report to the Government meeting. We also suggest imposing a formal rule for the priorities applicable to NE and trainees secondments to be evaluated every 12 months or earlier, if necessary.

## Developing Clear Rules for Civil Servants Retainment

One of the guarantees in the above mentioned mechanism is the obligation to work in the department, which appoints the national expert, after the term of secondment in Brussels, for a certain period of time (e.g. 2 years). If the person desires to leave, they should pay part of expenses related to the term of appointment in Brussels.

We recommend for MPSVR SR

**to issue a guideline for the interpretation of the State Service Act No.443/2006 in the area of NE and trainees retainment.**

The retainment obligation is only legally valid for education/training, however uncertainties appear in regard to the appointment of NE, which cannot be defined as training. The same problem applies to the appointments of structural trainees.

## **Proposing and Launching Information Campaigns Focused on Self-Government and the Private Sector**

Insufficient information about possibilities of appointing employees as national experts among local authorities, private and non-governmental sectors is the evidence of a weak national information strategy. This deficiency can be tackled by launching information campaign aimed at these sectors in order to stimulate their interest in appointing employees to Brussels. The campaign should have the form of short seminars and at the same time aim at intensified utilisation of E-mail communication. An integral part of the campaign will be the detailed explanation of the process of appointing employees to EU institutions, including the information on benefits that arise from such appointments. Providing state support for secondments will increase the number of appointees and subsequently improve understanding of EU issues and raise the involvement of these sectors in utilising these mechanisms. With regard to NGO sector, we propose to provide financial support from the transitional fund, as these means will be for the use of non-profit sector.

## **The Reform of the Transitional Fund for National Experts**

Inadequate utilisation of means from the transitional fund shows its imperfect 'tuning' in not reflecting the real needs. One of the main recommendations is to design and launch a new mechanism of using financial means to support national experts. The modification should allow:

- **to utilise the fund for the support of structural trainees**
- **to utilise the fund for an unlimited number of NE and trainees, reflecting the needs of individual organisations, but not exceeding the fund 'cap' (currently SKK 4.200.000 per year)**
- **to provide financial means both to cover the costs of NE/trainee substitutes and the costs and/or other expenses related to the actual NE/trainee secondment**
- **to provide flexible disbursement of the means, allowing the ministries to exchange the means allocated for national experts and trainees, based on inter-ministerial agreements, in case a particular ministry wishes to send more trainees in one year and more national experts the other**
- **to extend the support on all subjects the European regulations define as eligible for NE secondments, with the exception of the private sector**

An inspiring example in utilising NE secondments is Denmark, which decided in 2004 to pay special attention to NE appointments as a result of their inefficient use. They established a fund, which allows the ministries to cover 50% of salary costs. At the same time, a strategy is submitted each year, defining procedures applicable to NE secondments reflecting both current Danish and EU priorities.

The Danish objective is to have at least one expert in each DG, if the Government does not desire to have more in an area of particular significance. It is worth mentioning that in case a particular ministry refuses to appoint NE from the priority area to Brussels, the Danish Prime Minister will issue a direct order that the ministry must follow.

## **Trainees**

Besides national experts, the other significant group is trainees. It is important for PR, in co-operation with the national authorities, to contact the Slovaks in EU management positions, which can influence the distribution

of trainees in particular departments. With regard to the fact that the appointments of structural trainees are costly,

- **the ministries should be allowed to use the means from the transitional fund for national experts.**

Regarding structural traineeships we propose to use the mechanism for retainment of state servants in order to ensure return on investments. In the case of Blue Book traineeships in the EC and traineeships in other European institutions, it is essential to have as much Slovak applicants as possible. In regard to Blue Book traineeships the target numbers for a country depends on the size of the country and the number of applicants. We recommend for

- **MZV SR, within the framework of its activities, to provide information about these types of traineeship programmes (e.g. to local authorities, the private sector) and ensure potential applicants basic administrative services during the application process.**

All the information and documents required for application should be available on the web site of MZV SR and PR.

We also propose to regularly (twice a year) invite the trainees to meetings at PR, following the example of the Czech PR. This simple tool serves to improve the 'image' of PR and its approach to trainees and creates preconditions for a long-lasting co-operation, as most of the trainees plan to continue working with the EU agenda.

## ***Filling of the Management Positions***

Slovakia lacks the strategy to support career promotion of people interested in work in the EU institutions. This deficiency is significant especially in the process of filling both middle management positions (AD 9 – AD 13) and senior management positions (AD14, AD15, AD16). To fill them, three basic problems must be solved. The first is the need to have well-trained people to meet the set criteria for management positions and to convince them about the attractiveness of the offered positions. The second is the training of these candidates for selection procedures. The final is to provide the political support and fill the management positions. Each of these problems requires specific solutions, which must be universal, as solving only one of them does not help to meet the objectives.

- **In order to fill the middle and senior management positions it is necessary to motivate top-quality people to take part in selection procedures**

Selection procedures must not be long, as it discourages the majority of top-quality people. Therefore, it is essential to provide them with real experience from these procedures. In this respect, we suggest that MZV would organise regular meetings of potential EU job applicants with people who successfully passed the admission tests.

Each candidate must be acquired by direct headhunting. The individual approach from the very beginning is vital for the appropriate selection and must continue during the whole training for the selection procedure. The training should include simulation of all stages of the selection and the abovementioned advice of the successful candidates.

The last stage of the selection procedure is filling the management position, where political support is necessary. Here the Ambassador and the Government of SR should intervene directly, supported by the Commissioner and his cabinet. We recommend for the Ambassador to use his network of contacts in particular institutions and prepare the ground for lobbying from the side of the relevant Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister. In case of senior management positions, if required, the direct intervention of the Prime Minister should be involved. The Ambassador should also inform the Commissioner and members of his cabinet about the process and ask for their informal intervention (as in the case of the Hungarian Commissioner).



Based on this, we submit the following recommendations:

- **MZV, in collaboration with the Government Office and relevant ministries, should design the strategy for selection, training and staffing the applicants in middle and senior management positions. An integral part of the document, to be approved by the Government, would be the definition of competencies for each ministry in active search for candidates and their distribution to management positions in collaboration with PR. The ministries should regularly (once a year) submit a list of candidates who are experts in a particular area and meet the basic criteria for management positions. The list should at the same time involve the personal history of the candidates – their background in training, their level of motivation, etc.**
- **From the means allocated for the project of Academia Istropolitana support the training of applicants for middle and senior management positions.**
- **MZV appoints a responsible person to actively address potential applicants for management positions.**
- **MZV, in collaboration with MŠ SR and Academia Istropolitana, will provide, based on the abovementioned strategy, the training aiming at improving chances to pass the selection procedures**

In case of staffing lower level, middle and senior management positions it is necessary to use information channels created within the framework of formal and informal networks (more details in the chapter on Networking).

## ***Establishing the “Slovak House”***

One of the ongoing deficiencies in promoting SR in Brussels is the absence of the Slovak House. This way of concentrating different groups and activities is used in other Member States. The Slovaks in Brussels are already acquainted with the Czech House, where the Czechs and Slovaks meet on different cultural occasions, such as film screenings, exhibitions, etc. The insufficient capacity of premises does not allow Slovak PR to host larger events. Therefore, we recommend to

- **MZV SR to submit to the Government meeting the plan to establish the Slovak House in Brussels; the Government would allocate necessary financial means to this project.**

The ideal solution would be to establish one House to ‘shelter’ PR, the representatives of regions, private sector, lobbyists, NGOs and all the other relevant stakeholders.

## ***Evaluation of Activities***

In order to reach the desired effect in organising and implementing activities carried out by MZV SR, AIN, AI, PR SR and other institutions, it is essential to know the real impacts and the results of ongoing and finished activities. The evaluations should focus on the assessment of the choice of activities, their realisation, the methods used, their impacts and results. Based on the assessment, the institutions should know how to improve their efficiency in selecting and organising activities. At the same time, the evaluations might serve as the starting point in designing new activities. The institutions in Brussels, jointly trying to make the Slovak voice in Brussels louder, don't have the capacities to provide quality evaluation of all their activities. Therefore, it seems obvious to focus only on major activities of MZV SR, which in collaboration with AIN carries out the training programmes for EU job applicants, as well as the activities of the Permanent Representation of SR in Brussels. Also important is to ensure ex ante and ongoing evaluation of the national project of education carried out by Academia Istropolitana and funded by ESF.

Due to mentioned reasons we recommend for,

**MZV SR, in co-operation with MŠ SR and the Government Office, to design an evaluation plan by the end of 2007 and subsequently, in a public tender in the first half of 2008, choose external evaluators for the proposed activities**



## Panellists' Main Remarks and Ideas

Outputs of the discussion round during the "Slovak Voice in Brussels" conference in Bratislava, on 29th June 2007.

### Main remarks and ideas of Mr. Kristian Takáč, speaking on the "Slovak Voice in Brussels" conference as the first panellist.

*Kristian Takáč has been working at the European Commission for two years. He successfully passed the first open competition for job positions at EU institutions. He works at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. He spent one year working in the department for Integration of People with Disabilities and then moved to the Co-ordination Centre where he's responsible for EP relations, i.e. monitoring of DG initiatives in EP (supervising legislative processes).*

I agree with the report's main message. It's really necessary to increase Slovak influence in the EU and in this respect to even more significantly support the nominations of proper candidates for jobs at EU institutions, as well as to improve the networking of people in Brussels and the relations between Brussels and Bratislava. There was a correct reference made in the report, that one must act quickly because the situation of selection procedures will only remain favourable for the Slovaks until 2010, afterwards 'national quotas' will no longer be taken into consideration. First of all, it is inevitable to increase the number of middle and higher managers (where political support is required).

– I welcome the efforts to publish such a report, praising its excellence mainly in the methodology. The division into three parts: 1. Current Situation – 2. Optimal Stage – 3. What To Do In Order To Reach the Optimal Stage is easily understandable and educational. It is essential to secure further dissemination of the report to institutional structures in Slovakia as well as in Brussels. Since there's not been anyone in Slovakia so far to describe EU institutional selection procedures in detail, I praise the authors of the report for doing so.

– There are clear and accurate references made in the report to reveal weaknesses in presenting Slovakia in Brussels, as well as insufficient practices and performance of public institutions in Slovakia. Such principal weaknesses are: ineffective self-presentation, self-marketing and "shyness" of the candidates as well as insufficient language skills (this is due to inadequate Slovak system of formal education), lack of home country support, especially from governmental departments (it can be either technical, psychological or empowering support). There is also lack of consistent approach in Slovak institutions towards selection procedures, with no integral concept of staffing needs of strategic positions. However, this can be solved in a relatively short period by increasing the efficiency of collaboration between Slovak institutions (not only public, but also private sector and universities) and by providing excellent candidates to work at EU institutions. Unfortunately, the abovementioned "shyness" and ineffective self-presentation cannot be resolved quickly. The government of Mikuláš Dzurinda significantly strengthened Slovakia's 'self-confidence' and the country was considered to be the 'Central European tiger'. The government of Prime Minister Fico lacks focus and vision and Slovakia's losing this label after the change of the government. Investments to improve education and the results to follow are obviously a long-term issue, which is impossible to tackle by the year 2010.

– The report precisely identifies potential measures to improve the current situation:

- 1) To improve the performance of the Slovak Permanent Representation in order to build an effective bridge between Brussels and Bratislava. It is necessary to focus on strategic targets and areas and not just automatically 'copy' the Czech Representation, which emphasizes cultural events (Films on Thursdays). Culture for Slovaks living in Brussels is already well covered by the Slovak Catholic Mission, Czech Representation in collaboration with the Czech House. It is also important to focus on networking and improving the communication between Slovaks working at EU institutions and those who work for the government in the home country. One solution (which works excellent with the Swedes) are meetings of Slovaks from relevant DGs or their departments with their counterparts at the Permanent Representation office.
- 2) It is vital to build a better image for Slovakia, including the identification of key issues (e.g. resistance to tax harmonisation, or to common immigration policy, in forms of 'burden sharing').
- 3) To improve info-flows urgently – to re-design the web page of the Permanent Representation, so that it can provide relevant information, including job offers (it can easily be outsourced, but the Swedes do it by themselves, see: <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/114.jsessionid=aFmNNbrO7H3h> and <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/114.jsessionid=aFmNNbrO7H3h>).

[www.regeringen.se/sb/d/1478;jsessionid=a12EDGegz5Od](http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/1478;jsessionid=a12EDGegz5Od)) and the opportunity to subscribe a weekly newsletter.

– The Slovak Parliament must be involved in the overall framework of collaboration between Slovakia and Brussels in a more active manner. It is particularly relevant now, as parliaments can comment EU legislation, send inquiries and opinions and play an important role in IGC dealing with the EU Constitution.

– I disagree with the idea to build a ‘Slovak House’, which would represent common Slovak interests. There is no common interest. On the contrary, we need to support collaboration of Slovak stakeholders with their foreign counterparts operating in relevant sectors. There might be one exception regarding Trade Unions and the Business Alliance of Slovakia (BAS) that could be ‘sheltered’ by the Permanent Representation.

– I also disagree with the proposal to carry out a special lobbying course on the departmental level. This should more likely be organised by the private sector (AJG, BAS) or by NGOs, such as SGI.

### **Main remarks and ideas of Mrs. Zuzana Chudá, speaking on the “Slovak Voice in Brussels” conference as the second panellist.**

*Ing. Zuzana Chudá is a career diplomat. She's worked in various Slovak State offices – at the Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the UN in Vienna and at the Slovak Embassy in Oslo. She's currently a Deputy Director in the Department for Internal Affairs and EU Institutions at the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

#### Introduction:

- The document – *The ‘Slovak Voice in Brussels’ Report* – is stirring, inspirational and provocative in a positive sense – it brings out questions and answers that will definitely make the Slovak voice in Brussels ‘louder’;
- Acknowledging the high level of personal commitment of the authors – Mgr. Renata Králiková and Mgr. Ctibor Košťál and the SGI staff;
- Thanks to the British Embassy in Bratislava for supporting the project financially;
- Input of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs – the Department collaborated from the very beginning with SGI on the project (consultations, exchange of data, contacts, best practises, etc.);

#### Comments:

- The report provides a complex picture of the current situation regarding Slovak representation in Brussels (and in other EU institutions);
- Appropriate report structure: monitoring the current stage, identifying unsolved issues, offering possible solutions;
- “The voice” of Slovakia in Brussels. Existing Slovak experience and best practices in other EU Member States;
- Current role of the Slovak State Department: (Department’s initiative in the fields of HR policies regarding Slovak relation to EU institutions; communication with other departments of Central Government Authorities (CGA); co-ordination meetings with Heads of CGA HR departments; business trip of heads of CGA HR departments to Brussels in 2006 and the upcoming trip of Heads of CGA Offices to Brussels in 2007; the database of candidates for middle and higher management positions; public events – training and seminars for EU job applicants; information on upcoming selection procedures; The Report on Slovak Staff Representation at EU institutions; Rules and procedures to appoint national experts and interns to EU institutions; Training for selection procedures at EU institutions; etc.
- Co-ordination in the field of HR policies related to the EU – present status and prospects. (Previously a task of Civil Service Office, currently a ‘special co-ordination unit’ is missing);
- Lobbying;

#### Conclusions:

- Information flows;
- Training and education (Info on the National Project); selecting and supporting Slovak candidates to work in EU institutions;
- Lobbying;
- Opportunities – trainees and national experts;
- Efficient co-ordination on the national level;
- Networking and collaboration with Slovaks already present in Brussels (sharing experience);

**Main remarks and ideas of Mrs. Kateřina Šafaříková, speaking on the “Slovak Voice in Brussels” conference as the final panellist.**

*Kateřina Šafaříková is working as a correspondent in Brussels for the Czech daily ‘Lidové Noviny’ and the Slovak daily ‘SME’.*

**The Slovak Voice in Brussels is not particularly loud**

- This must not necessarily be a disadvantage:
  - a) Slovakia has no significant problems in Brussels, except for some minor operational and short-term difficulties the majority of new Member States are also facing
  - b) Slovakia has generally no bad label, which could – perhaps even unjustifiably – jeopardise its reputation in Brussels
- Slovakia is not linked with any big issue, such as the Czech Republic regarding the fight for human rights in totalitarian regimes or the Baltic states regarding their policy towards Russia.
- It is not a major mistake, e.g. Slovenia or Malta haven’t been making any significant ‘impressions’ in the EU as well.
- But it’s a pity. Because:
  - a) Slovakia has already been able to inspire other Member States and gather all the attention (in times of economic reforms of the previous government)
  - b) a small state must have a substantial and coherent foreign/European policy to be heard and listened to. The changes and whims of the big states are more likely to be tolerated, simply because they are big and more important. The same issue could harm a smaller state.
- What To Do
  - a) Slovakia should clearly define and address the issues, which reflect its natural interests – regarding geography, economy and the previous ‘impressions’. Those issues could include free movement of people, liberalisation of services – the topics the new Member States are trying to promote, but none of them, counting Slovakia, has been strongly supporting them. Perhaps even the issue of EU enlargement to include the Balkan States, since Slovakia backs their European ambitions and the Slovak diplomat Miroslav Lajčák is already holding the second highest position in European diplomacy, being Javier Solana’s Ambassador for Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - b) what is important: the issues must be of national and not only governmental priority. They must go beyond changes in the government because of the abovementioned logic: if France or Germany decide to change their priorities every four years, it doesn’t matter. But it does matter in the case of a small state. It confuses its partners, blurs its own picture while wasting all of the previously invested energy.

## References

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The Proposed Principles of Human Resource Policy of Slovak Republic in regard to European Union, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 140/2005 from 13th July 2005  
<http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/F484B2290AFCD38FC1257030004434F4?OpenDocument>

The Handbook for EU Job Applicants  
[http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw\\_ByID/ID\\_801F7EBC83034599C12571E90045F2DB\\_SK/\\$File/prirucka%20EU\\_2006%20\\_dotlac.pdf](http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_801F7EBC83034599C12571E90045F2DB_SK/$File/prirucka%20EU_2006%20_dotlac.pdf)

The Rules on appointing National Experts to the European Commission  
[http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw\\_ByID/ID\\_8A6E2B7E9046E80EC12572AA00574DCD\\_SK/\\$File/pravidl%E1%20vysielania%20n%E1rodn%FDch%20expertov.pdf](http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_8A6E2B7E9046E80EC12572AA00574DCD_SK/$File/pravidl%E1%20vysielania%20n%E1rodn%FDch%20expertov.pdf)

The Report on Staffing of Servants in EU Institutions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 642/2004 from 30th June 2004  
<http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/89CFE245BE06F718C1256EBC003DBDB2?OpenDocument>

The Report on Personal Representation of SR in the EU Institutions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 704/2006 from 30th August 2006 <http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/BA5949615857D767C12571A000389682?OpenDocument>

The Revised Rules and Procedures Applicable to Slovak National Experts and Trainees to the European Union Institutions, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 24/2007 from 10th January 2007  
<http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/83CAD1AB8CA3B87FC1257258004303C3?OpenDocument>

The Report on Personal Representation of SR in the EU Institutions in 2006, approved by the Slovak Government in the Decree No. 421/2007 from 9 May 2007  
<http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/D7FF1CCFFE8CDEB3C12572D4002BF091?OpenDocument>

<http://www.belgicko.exil.sk/>

<http://www.employment.gov.sk/new/index.php?SMC=1>

<http://www.ec.europa.eu/>

<http://europa.eu/epso/>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/assistantAlphaOrderByMep.do?letter=K&language=SK>

<http://www.exil.sk/>

<http://www.governance.sk/index.php?id=225>

<http://www.jenewein.sk/eppp/>

<http://www.mfa.sk/zu/index/podstranka.php?id=367>

<http://www.minedu.sk/>

<http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf?Open>

<http://www.mzv.cz/>

<http://www.skmbussels.be/>

<http://www.sme.sk/c/3255359/Brusel-Potrebuje-tlmcnikov.html>

<http://www.zbierka.sk/zz/predpisy/default.aspx?PredpisID=16161&FileName=01-z575&Rocnik=2001>

<http://www.zbierka.sk/zz/predpisy/default.aspx?PredpisID=15894&FileName=01-z312&Rocnik=2001>

<http://www.zmos.sk/default.aspx?id=9&lang=sk>

## Appendices

### Appendix No. 1

**Number of national experts working for EU Institutions  
(according to the employer and receiving institution)**  
(prepared in accordance with Gov.decision No. 723/2004/B3)

#### Central Government Authorities

Employer	Number	EU Institution	Date of appointment	Field
<b><i>The Ministry of Economy</i></b>	1.	EC DG TREN	16.9.2005-15.9.2006 16.9.2006-15.9.2007	
	2.	EUROSTAT Luxemburg	1.12.2006-30.11.2008	
<b><i>The Ministry of Interior</i></b>	3.	EC DG Justice, Freedom and Security, BXL	1.10.2004-30.9.2005 1.10.2005-30.9.2007	Coordination of anti-drug policy
	4.	Council General Secretariat	1.5.2005-30.4.2007 1.5.2007-30.4.2009	Anti-terrorist Coordinator Unit
<b><i>Bureau of Border and Aliens Police, Presidium of the Police Force</i></b>	5.	FRONTEX Warsaw	16.8.2006-15.8.2008	Risk Analysis Unit
<b><i>The Ministry of Finance</i></b>	6.	EC Eurostat, Luxemburg	16.1.2007-15.1.2008	
<b><i>Custom Criminality Unit, The Ministry of Finance</i></b>	7.	EC OLAF, BXL	16.7.2006-15.7.2008	
<b><i>The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family</i></b>	8.	EC DG Employment, BXL	1.2.2005-31.1.2007 1.2.2007-31.1.2008	
<b><i>The Ministry of Education</i></b>	9.	EC DG Education and Culture, BXL	1.12.2004-30.11.2006 1.12.2006-30.11.2007	
<b><i>The Ministry of Justice</i></b>	10.	EC DG Justice and Home Affairs	1.5.2004-30.4.2006 1.5.2006-30.4.2008	
<b><i>The Ministry of Environment</i></b>	11.	EC DG REGIO, BXL	16.2.2007-15.2.2008	
<b><i>The Ministry of Agriculture, Forest Research Institute, Zvolen</i></b>	12.	EC DG Research Joint Research Centre, Ispra, Italy	16.3.2004-15.3.2005 16.3.2005-15.3.2006 16.3.2006-15.3.2007 16.3.2007-15.3.2008	Institute for Environment and Sustainability



Other Central Government Authorities				
Employer	Number	EU Institution	Date of appointment	Field
<b>The Government Office</b>	13.	EC DG Translation, Luxemburg	16.2.2005-15.2.2007 16.2.2007-15.2.2009	Unit Sk
	14.	EC DG REGIO	1.6.2005-31.5.2007 1.6.2007-31.5.2008	
	15.	EC DG Translation, Luxemburg	16.5.2006-15.5.2008	Unit Sk
	16.	EC DG Translation, Luxemburg	16.5.2006-15.5.2008	Unit Sk
	17.	EC DG Translation, Luxemburg	16.5.2006-15.5.2008	Unit Sk
<b>Statistical Office</b>	18.	EUROSTAT Luxemburg	1.11.2004-31.10.2006 1.11.2006-31.10.2007	Statistics
	19.	EUROSTAT Luxemburg	1.4.2005-31.3.2007 1.4.2007-31.3.2008	
<b>National Security Authority</b>	20.	Council General Secretariat EU, BXL	15.9.2004-14.9.2006 15.9.2006-14.9.2007 15.9.2007-14.9.2008 from 30.4. to 1.10.2006 Maternity leave	Inspection and Advisory Unit Security
	21.	EC DG ADMIN, BXL	1.1.2005-31.12.2006 1.1.2007-31.12.2008	Inspection and Advisory Unit Security Directorate DS3

## National experts from other authorities

Employer	Number	EU Institution	Date of appointment	Field
<b>State Geological Institute of Dionyz Stur</b>	22.	EC DG Research Joint Research Centre, Ispra, Italy	1.3.2005-28.2.2006 1.3.2006-28.2.2007 1.3.2007-29.2.2008	Institute for Protection and the Security of Citizen
	23.	EC DG Translation, Luxemburg	16.10.2005-15.10.2007	Unit Sk
<b>Institute of Geography, Slovak Academy of Sciences Bratislava</b>	24.	EC DG JRC Ispra, Italy	16.1.2006-15.1.2007 16.1.2007-15.1.2008	Institute for Environment and Sustainability
<b>Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute</b>	25.	European Environment Agency, Copenhagen	16.1.2007-15.1.2008	Climate Change
	26.	European Environment Agency, Copenhagen	16.1.2007-16.7.2007	Climate Change

<b>INFOSTAT Bratislava</b>	27.	EUROSTAT Luxemburg	1.10.2003-30.9.2005 1.10.2005-30.9.2006 1.10.2006-31.1.2007 1.2.2007-30.9.2007	Statistics
<b>DAPHNE, Institute of Applied Ecology</b>	28.	EC DG Environment BXL	1.6.2006-31.5.2007 1.6.2007-31.5.2008	Unit B. 1 - Agriculture Sector
<b>Material Research Institute, Slovak Academy of Sciences Košice</b>	29.	EC DG Research, BXL	16.10.2004-15.10.2005 16.10.2005-15.10.2006 16.10.2006-15.10.2007	
<b>Center for Chemical Substances and Preparations, Bratislava</b>	30.	EC Joint Research Centre Ispra, Italy	1.1.2007-31.12.2007	

**Completed appointments**

<b>The Ministry of Environment, Water Research Institute</b>		EC DG Joint Research Centre, BXL	16.1.2004-15.1.2005 16.1.2005-15.1.2006 16.1.2006-15.1.2007 From 16.1.2007 statutory position in DG JRC	Directorate of Institutional and scientific relations
<b>The Ministry of Finance</b>		EC DG MARKT, BXL	1.7.2006-30.6.2007	
<b>Institute of preventive clinical medicine, Slovak Medical University</b>		EC DG Research, BXL	1.4.2005-31.3.2006	
<b>Technical University in Košice</b>		EC DG Research, BXL EC DG Research, BXL	1.6.2005-31.5.2006 1.6.2006-31.5.2007  1.3.2004-28.2.2005 (1.3.2005 - AD)	
<b>Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute</b>		EC DG JRC Ispra, Italy	1.3.2006-28.2.2007	Institute for Environment and Sustainability
<b>Statistical Office</b>		EUROSTAT Luxemburg	1.10.2003-31.1.2007	Statistics
<b>Slovak Technical University in Bratislava</b>		EC DG Research Joint Research Centre, Ispra, Italy	1.3.2003-28.2.2005 1.3.2005-28.2.2006 1.3.2006-28.2.2007 From 1.3.2007-30.4.2009 Contractual agent, JRC	Institute for Environment and Sustainability

## **Appendix No. 2**

### **Priorities of the Slovak Republic in the appointment of national experts and trainees to the EU institutions**

Priorities in the appointment of national experts and trainees are based on the data from the Central Government Authorities which are based on the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic and experience of departments in the appointment of national experts and trainees to the EU institutions:

- Use of the EU financial resources
- Regional Policy and Regional Development
- Priorities set in the Hague Program to strengthen freedom, security, and justice in the EU, in the Action Plan for Freedom, Justice and Security and EU external relations strategy in the area of freedom, security and justice.
- Priorities connected to the EU internal market and realization of the EU internal market freedom and Lisbon Strategy.
- Audiovison
- Intellectual property
- Cultural heritage (tangible and intangible)
- Statistics
- Official Secret Protection
- Security and Defense Policy
- Competition
- Industrial Property and its protection
- Energy and Nuclear Safety
- Integrated Protection, Rational Use of the Water and Anti flood protection
- Air Protection, Protection of the ozone layer and minimizing of the unfavorable impacts of the climate change including the support of renewable energy resources
- Waste management
- Protection and Regeneration of the Nature
- Agriculture
- Consumer Protection

**Appendix No. 3****The list of interviewed people**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution / Organization</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>The place of the interview</b>
1.	Vladimír Grieger	EPSO	10.5.2007	Brussels
2.	Kristian Takáč	EC, DG Employment	17.5.2007	Bratislava
3.	Maroš Šefčovič	Ambassador PR of the Slovak Republic to the EU, Brussels	9.5.2007	Brussels
4.	Juraj Nociar	Deputy Ambassador PR of the Slovak Republic to the EU, Brussels	8.5.2007	Brussels
5.	Danka Hulková	PR of the Slovak Republic to the EU, Brussels	9.5.2007	Brussels
6.	Peter Javorčík	Member of the Cabinet of the Commissioner Figel'	8.5.2007	Brussels
7.	Katarína Matheriová	Director, DG Regio	9.5.2007	Brussels
8.	Vladimír Šucha	Director, DG Education and Culture	8.5.2007	Brussels
9.	Zuzana Harmathová	National Expert, DG Employment	8.5.2007	Brussels
10.	Mária Hrabinská	National Expert, DG Education and Culture	8.5.2007	Brussels
11.	Alena Dušatková	Director, Academia Istropolitana	27.4.2007	Bratislava
12.	Mária Nádaždyová	Former Secretary of the PR of the Slovak Republic to the EU in the area of the Employment and Social Policy	18.4.2007	Bratislava
13.	Vibeke Pasternak	Permanent Representation of Denmark to the EU	10.5.2007	Brussels
14.	Szilvia Dora	Special Advisor to the Permanent Representative, PR of Hungary to the EU	29.5.2007	Brussels
15.	Natália Tarasová	Head of Office, Prešov Region Brussels Office, House of Regions	10.5.2007	Brussels
16.	Ivan Štefunko	EurActiv	25.4.2007	Bratislava
17.	Juraj Draxler	NGO, CEPS	25.5.2007	Bratislava
18.	Ann Mettler	Executive Director, Lisbon Council	10.5.2007	Brussels
19.	Juraj Sevela	Researcher	9.5.2007	Brussels
20.	Helga Jančovičová	European Projects Office, Comenius University	18.4.2007	Bratislava
21.	Lucia Kubošová	journalist, EU Observer	9.5.2007	Brussels
22.	Kateřina Šafařiková	journalist, Lidové noviny, SME	10.5.2007	Brussels
23.	Darina Malová	Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University	18.4.2007	Bratislava
24.	Zuzana Hečková	Assistant of the Member of EP Irena Belohorská	10.5.2007	Brussels

25.	Miroslav Mikolášik	Member of EP	10.5.2007	Brussels
26.	Katarína Uherová	EC, Energy Cell, DG External Relations	7.5.2007	Brussels
27.	Dušan Chrenek	EC, DG Agri, Head of Unit, International Affairs Unit ACP and South Africa, FAO, FOOD Aid	7.5.2007	Brussels
28.	Leonardo Mizzi	EC, DG Agri, Head of Unit, International Affairs Unit ACP and South Africa, FAO, FOOD Aid,	7.5.2007	Brussels
29.	Eniko Felfoldi	EC, DG Justice, Freedom and Security - Fight against economic, financial and cyber crime	7.5.2007	Brussels
30.	Dora Balazs	EC, DG Justice, Freedom and Security - Fight against economic, financial and cyber crime	7.5.2007	Brussels
31.	Patrik Zoltvany,	Amrop Hever Office in Brussels	2.3.2007	Bratislava
32.	Roman Schönwiesner	Press Officer of the Representation of the EC in the Slovak Republic	8.3.2007	Bratislava
33.	Andrea Elscheková – Matisová	Head of the Representation of the EC in the Slovak Republic	13.3.2007	Bratislava
34.	Róbert Kirnág	Director, Department of Interior Affairs and EU Institutions, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs	11.4.2007	Bratislava
35.	Emília Tomašovičová	Director, Personal Department, The Ministry of Finance	25.4.2007	Bratislava
36.	Kata Cigánová	Academia Istropolitana Nova, Department of European Studies	12.4.2007	Bratislava
37.	Róbert Hajšel	EP Information Office, Head of Unit	12.4.2007	Bratislava

During the preparation of the report (19. 6. – 28. 6.) communication via phone and/or e-mail took place with the following people:

Ján Mazák, General Advocate The Court of Justice of the European Communities

Milan Krištof, the Cabinet of General Advocate The Court of Justice of the European Communities

Július Molnár, Member of the European Court of Auditors

Andrej Stec, the Cabinet of Mr. Svaby – Judge of the Court of First Instance

Juliana Pogáčová, the Cabinet of Mr. Klučka – Judge of the Court of Justice of the European Communities

## Appendix No. 4

Repartition des fonctionnaires et agents temporaires par nationalité, catégoric et grade (tous budgets)  
Distribution of officials and temporary staff by nationality, category and grade (all budgets)

	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB	GR	HU	IE	IT	LV	LU	LT	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	XX	Total	
AD16	1	1				7	1		4	1	6	6	1		3	4		1			1		2		1			1	41	
AD15	4	25		1	2	24	10		28	3	37	36	13	2	9	21		2			13	2	10		7	1		1	248	
AD14	17	64		3	2	55	14	3	42	12	96	51	30	7	17	37	2	7	2	1	27	7	17		19	1	3	1	537	
AD13	5	43				25	8	1	15	4	36	46	12		12	16	1	1			12		8	1	6				253	
AD12	46	276		5	6	271	100	2	251	52	296	283	205	15	77	261	4	20	3	2	125	15	134		56	3	2	8	2.521	
AD11	71	241	1		1	312	61		240	92	331	210	130		51	291		6			108		128	1	113		7	2.395		
AD10	36	128		1		138	29		125	71	162	101	63		25	156		5		1	40		40		58		1	1	1.181	
AD9	15	103		5	4	102	17	4	73	35	112	48	29	8	22	112	6	2	7	5	32	11	31		37	3	4		825	
AD8	33	171	1		3	166	28	1	122	48	133	49	26	2	22	131	2	1	1	1	41	4	26		40	4	1		1.057	
AD7	3	14	2	7	32	13	1	10	18	5	12	3	3	36		9	14			10	6	2	80	2	1	6	8	17	314	
AD6	101	3	3	3	9	148	15	4	67	29	123	53	18	14	9	106	3	2	4	1	36	7	20	1	25	4	6	1	829	
AD5	5	26	29	26	141	48	3	80	33	6	42	13	3	173	7	20	93	1	77	50	4	244	3	34	7	75	98		1.341	
AD	256	1.190	36	51	200	1.309	287	105	1.018	358	1.386	899	534	255	254	1.164	125	48	104	67	441	370	421	38	375	99	132	20	11.542	
%	2,2%	10,3%	0,3%	0,4%	1,7%	11,3%	2,5%	0,9%	8,8%	3,1%	12,0%	7,8%	4,6%	2,2%	2,2%	10,1%	1,1%	0,4%	0,9%	0,6%	3,8%	3,2%	3,6%	0,3%	3,2%	0,9%	1,1%	0,2%	100%	
AST11		12				6			5		12	6	2		2	9		2			3		1						60	
AST10	7	151		1		15	9		38	15	49	44	15		16	56		17			41		12		13		2		501	
AST9	1	54				15	2		31	3	22	17	4		9	25		3			17		8		1				212	
AST8	11	290		1		57	20		78	30	74	43	29		28	91		10			41		26		16				846	
AST7	44	295			1	75	25		74	44	117	52	36		25	143		20			42		23	1	28				1.045	
AST6	21	727		1		190	59		135	28	177	103	68		63	295		67			58	1	68		40		3		2.105	
AST5	12	627				114	37	1	109	36	129	91	71	1	56	199	1	39		1	31	1	76	1	19	1		2	1.654	
AST4	61	578	1		2	111	28		110	55	157	56	84	3	48	266		37		1	27		62	1	46		2	1	1.737	
AST3	21	593	12	7	26	98	24	19	141	44	224	49	54	50	31	230	27	13	18	7	21	72	48	20	56	17	38	s	1.962	
AST2	4	31		1	1	12	1	1	12	1	30	5	6	1		25		3	1	1	1		4		2	2	1		196	
AST1	2	329	14	13	84	30	3	21	28	4	85	47	13	114	25	46	25	2	18	7	10	299	5	19	1	23	44	1	1	1.312
AST	184	3.737	27	24	114	723	208	42	761	260	1.076	513	382	169	304	1.385	53	213	37	17	292	373	333	42	222	43	85	11	11.630	
%	1,6%	32,1%	0,2%	0,2%	1,0%	6,2%	1,8%	0,4%	6,5%	2,2%	9,3%	4,4%	3,3%	1,5%	2,6%	11,9%	0,5%	1,8%	0,3%	0,1%	2,5%	3,2%	2,9%	0,4%	1,9%	0,4%	0,7%	0,1%	100%	
Total:	440	4.927	63	75	314	2.032	495	147	1.779	618	2.462	1.412	916	424	558	2.549	178	261	141	84	733	743	754	80	597	142	217	31	23.172	
%	1,9%	21,3%	0,3%	0,3%	1,4%	8,8%	2,1%	0,6%	7,7%	2,7%	10,6%	6,1%	4,0%	1,8%	2,4%	11,0%	0,8%	1,1%	0,6%	0,4%	3,2%	3,2%	3,3%	0,3%	2,6%	0,6%	0,9%	0,1%	100%	

Source COMREF 21/05/2007

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**Appendix No. 5****Members of the European Parliament representing Slovakia and their assistants**

	<b>MP</b>	<b>assistant</b>
	<b>Baco Peter</b>	Krkošková Mária
		Mečiarová Jana
	<b>Bauer Edit</b>	Klenovics Gabriel
		Szaraz Krisztina
	<b>Belohorská Irena</b>	Cabaj Juraj
		Hečková Zuzana
		Rozin Alexander
	<b>Beňová Monika</b>	Platznerová Michaela
		Straková Klára
	<b>Duka-Zólyomi Arpád</b>	Lancz Attila
		Sido Arpád
		Vincze Norbert
	<b>Gaľa Milan</b>	Hurná Júlia
		Milco Radoslav
	<b>Hudacký Ján</b>	Ridziková Plecítá Sonia
	<b>Koterec Miloš</b>	Cals Valeria
	<b>Kozlík Sergej</b>	
	<b>Maňka Vladimír</b>	Lysinova Lujza
	<b>Mikolášik Miroslav</b>	Kolková Mária
		Ehret Viera
		Krčová Renáta
	<b>Pleštinská Zita</b>	Jastrzemska Katarína
		Krafčík Heribert
	<b>Šťastný Peter</b>	Bezák Marián
		Jankovičová Veronika
		Ohrablová Eva
	<b>Záborská Anna</b>	Stach Peter
		Teuscher Tobias
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>

**Appendix No. 6****Slovak - English list of Directorates-General**

<b>Directorates-General</b>	<b>Generálne riaditeľstvo</b>
Taxation and Customs Union	Dane a colná únia
Transport and Energy	Doprava a energetika
Competition	Hospodárska súťaž
Economic and Financial Affairs	Hospodárske a finančné záležitosti
Humanitarian Aid	Humanitárna pomoc
Information Society and Media	Informačná spoločnosť a médiá
Informatics	Informatika
Interpretation	Tlmočenie
Communication	Komunikácia
Trade	Obchod
Personnel and Administration	Personál a administratíva
Enterprise and Industry	Podnikanie a priemysel
Agriculture and Rural Development	Poľnohospodárstvo a rozvoj vidieka
Translation	Preklady
Regional Policy	Regionálna politika
Budget	Rozpočet
Enlargement	Rozšírenie
Development	Rozvoj
Fisheries and Maritime Affairs	Rybné hospodárstvo a námorné záležitosti
Joint Research Center	Spoločné výskumné stredisko
Justice, Freedom and Security	Spravodlivosť, sloboda a bezpečnosť
Internal Market and Services	Vnútorný trh a služby
External Relations	Vonkajšie vzťahy
Executive Agencies	Výkonné agentúry
Research	Výskum
Education and Culture	Vzdelávanie a kultúra
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	Zamestnanosť, sociálne záležitosti a rovnaké príležitosti
Health and Consumer Protection	Zdravie a ochrana spotrebiteľov
Environment	Životné prostredie

## **Appendix No. 7**

### **The list of abbreviations**

<b>AD</b>	Administrator
<b>AI</b>	Academia Istropolitana
<b>AIN</b>	Academia Istropolitana Nova
<b>AST</b>	Assistant
<b>BAS</b>	Business Alliance of Slovakia
<b>CCA</b>	Consultative Committee on Appointments
<b>CGA</b>	Central Government Authority
<b>DGs</b>	Directorates General
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECJ</b>	European Court of Justice
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EPSO</b>	European Personnel Selection Office
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>EU 10</b>	Member States which entered EU on 1st May 2004 (often labeled as the New Member States)
<b>HR</b>	Human resources
<b>MF SR</b>	The Slovak Ministry of Finance
<b>MPSVR SR</b>	The Slovak Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family
<b>MŠ SR</b>	The Slovak Ministry of Education
<b>MZV SR</b>	The Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>NE</b>	National Experts
<b>SGI</b>	The Slovak Governance Institute
<b>PR</b>	The Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU
<b>SR</b>	Slovak Republic
<b>SSO</b>	The Slovak Statistical Office
<b>ZMOS</b>	The Association of Slovak Towns and Municipalities

## **Appendix No. 8**

### **Summary of Tables**

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## **Appendix No. 9**

**Types of posts in each function group, as provided for in Article 5(3)**

**The Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of European Communities”, from 5 March 1968 amended by the Council Regulation No. 723 from 22 March 2004, valid from 1 May 2004**

Function group AD		Function group AST	
Director-General	AD 16		
Director-General/ Director	AD 15		
Administrator working for example as: Director/ Head of unit/ Adviser/ linguistic expert; economic expert; legal expert; medical expert; veterinary expert; scientific expert; research expert; financial expert, audit expert	AD 14		
Administrator working for example as: Head of Unit/ Adviser/ linguistic expert; economic expert; legal expert; medical expert; veterinary expert; scientific expert; research expert; financial expert, audit expert	AD 13		
Administrator working for example as: Head of Unit/ principal translator, principal interpreter, principal economist; principal lawyer; principal medical officer; principal veterinary inspector; principal scientist; principal researcher; principal financial officer, principal audit officer	AD 12		
Administrator working for example as: Head of Unit/ principal translator, principal interpreter, principal economist; principal lawyer; principal medical officer; principal veterinary inspector; principal scientist; principal researcher; principal financial officer, principal audit officer	AD11	AST 11	Assistant working for example as: Personal assistant (p.a.); clerical officer; technical officer; IT officer
Administrator working for example as: Head of Unit/ senior translator; senior interpreter; senior economist; senior lawyer; senior medical officer; senior veterinary inspector; senior scientist; senior researcher; senior financial officer, senior audit officer	AD 10	AST 10	Assistant working for example as: Personal assistant (p.a.); clerical officer; technical officer; IT officer
Administrator working for example as: Head of Unit/ senior translator; senior interpreter; senior economist ; senior lawyer; senior medical officer; senior veterinary inspector; senior scientist; senior researcher; senior financial officer, senior audit officer	AD9	AST 9	Assistant working for example as: Personal assistant (p.a.); clerical officer; technical officer; IT officer
Administrator working for example as: Translator; interpreter; economist; lawyer; medical officer; veterinary inspector; scientist; researcher; financial officer, auditor	AD8	AST 8	Assistant working for example as: Senior clerk; senior documentalist; senior technician; senior IT operative

Administrator working for example as: Translator; interpreter; economist; lawyer; medical officer; veterinary inspector; scientist; researcher; financial officer, auditor	AD7	AST 7	Assistant working for example as: Senior clerk; senior documentalist; senior technician; senior IT operative
Administrator working for example as: Junior translator; junior interpreter; junior economist; junior lawyer; junior medical officer; junior veterinary inspector; junior scientist; junior researcher; junior financial officer, junior auditor	AD6	AST 6	Assistant working for example as: Clerk; documentalist; technician; IT operative
Administrator working for example as: Junior translator; junior interpreter; junior economist; junior lawyer; junior medical officer; junior veterinary inspector; junior scientist; junior researcher; junior financial officer, junior auditor	ADS	AST 5	Assistant working for example as: Clerk; documentalist; technician; IT operative
		AST 4	Assistant working for example as: Junior clerk; junior documentalist; junior technician, junior IT operative
		AST 3	Assistant working for example as: Junior clerk; junior documentalist; junior technician, junior IT operative, Parliamentary usher <sup>29</sup>
		AST 2	Assistant working for example as: Filing clerk; technical attendant; IT attendant, Parliamentary usher <sup>29</sup> .
		AST1	Assistant working for example as: Filing clerk; technical attendant; IT attendant, Parliamentary usher <sup>29</sup>







ISBN 978-80-89244-19-5